THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM HAZLITT IN TWENTY-ONE VOLUMES

CENTENARY EDITION
Edited by
P. P. HOWE

VOLUME FIVE

THIS EDITION IS LIMITED TO
ONE THOUSAND SETS FOR
SALE IN ENGLAND AND THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF
WILLIAM HAZLITT

EDITED BY P. P. HOWE

AFTER THE EDITION OF
A. R. WALLER AND ARNOLD GLOVER

VOLUME FIVE

Lectures on the English Poets *and* A View of the English Stage

J. M. DENT AND SONS, LTD.
LONDON AND TORONTO

CONTENTS

LECTURES ON THE ENGLISH POETS

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Published in 1818 in one 8vo volume with the following title-page: 'Lectures on the English Poets. Delivered at the Surrey Institution. By William Hazlitt. London: Printed for Taylor and Hessey, 93, Fleet Street. 1818.' The volume was printed by T. Miller, Noble Street, Cheapside. A second edition, partly reset, correcting the 'Errata,' and effecting other slight changes, was published in 1819. Of this the present issue is a reprint. On the verso of the half-title of both editions appears the following advertisement: 'This day is published, Characters of Shakespear's Plays, By William Hazlitt. Second Edition, 8vo. price 10s. 6d. boards.'

CONTENTS

LECTURES ON

THE ENGLISH POETS

LECTURE I.—INTRODUCTORY

ON POETRY IN GENERAL

The best general notion which I can give of poetry is, that it is the natural impression of any object or event, by its vividness exciting an involuntary movement of imagination and passion, and producing, by sympathy, a certain modulation of the voice, or sounds, expressing it.

In treating of poetry, I shall speak first of the subject-matter of it, next of the forms of expression to which it gives birth, and afterwards of its connection with harmony of sound.

Poetry is the language of the imagination and the passions. It relates to whatever gives immediate pleasure or pain to the human mind. It comes home to the bosoms and businesses of men; for nothing but what so comes home to them in the most general and intelligible shape, can be a subject for poetry. Poetry is the universal language which the heart holds with nature and itself. He who has a contempt for poetry, cannot have much respect for himself, or for any thing else. It is not a mere frivolous accomplishment, (as some persons have been led to imagine) the trifling amusement of a few idle readers or leisure hours—it has been the study and delight of mankind in all ages. Many people suppose that poetry is something to be found only in books, contained in lines of ten syllables, with like endings: but wherever there is a sense of beauty, or power, or harmony, as in the motion of a wave of the sea, in the growth of a flower that 'spreads its sweet leaves to the air, and dedicates its beauty to the sun,'—*there* is poetry, in its birth. If history is a grave study, poetry may be said to be a graver: its materials lie deeper, and

are spread wider. History treats, for the most part, of the cumbrous and unwieldly masses of things, the empty cases in which the affairs of the world are packed, under the heads of intrigue or war, in different states, and from century to century: but there is no thought or feeling that can have entered into the mind of man, which he would be eager to communicate to others, or which they would listen to with delight, that is not a fit subject for poetry. It is not a branch of authorship: it is 'the stuff of which our life is made.' The rest is 'mere oblivion,' a dead letter: for all that is worth remembering in life, is the poetry of it. Fear is poetry, hope is poetry, love is poetry, hatred is poetry; contempt, jealousy, remorse, admiration, wonder, pity, despair, or madness, are all poetry. Poetry is that fine particle within us, that expands, rarefies, refines, raises our whole being: without it 'man's life is poor as beast's.' Man is a poetical animal: and those of us who do not study the principles of poetry, act upon them all our lives, like Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, who had always spoken prose without knowing it. The child is a poet in fact, when he first plays at hide-and-seek, or repeats the story of Jack the Giant-killer; the shepherd-boy is a poet, when he first crowns his mistress with a garland of flowers; the countryman, when he stops to look at the rainbow; the city-apprentice, when he gazes after the Lord-Mayor's show; the miser, when he hugs his gold; the courtier, who builds his hopes upon a smile; the savage, who paints his idol with blood; the slave, who worships a tyrant, or the tyrant, who fancies himself a god;—the vain, the ambitious, the proud, the choleric man, the hero and the coward, the beggar and the king, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, all live in a world of their own making; and the poet does no more than describe what all the others think and act. If his art is folly and madness, it is folly and madness at second hand. 'There is warrant for it.' Poets alone have not 'such seething brains, such shaping fantasies, that apprehend more than cooler reason' can.

> 'The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
> Are of imagination all compact.
> One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;
> The madman. While the lover, all as frantic,
> Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
> The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heav'n to earth, from earth to heav'n;
> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.
> Such tricks hath strong imagination.'

ON POETRY IN GENERAL

If poetry is a dream, the business of life is much the same. If it is a fiction, made up of what we wish things to be, and fancy that they are, because we wish them so, there is no other nor better reality. Ariosto has described the loves of Angelica and Medoro: but was not Medoro, who carved the name of his mistress on the barks of trees, as much enamoured of her charms as he? Homer has celebrated the anger of Achilles: but was not the hero as mad as the poet? Plato banished the poets from his Commonwealth, lest their descriptions of the natural man should spoil his mathematical man, who was to be without passions and affections, who was neither to laugh nor weep, to feel sorrow nor anger, to be cast down nor elated by any thing. This was a chimera, however, which never existed but in the brain of the inventor; and Homer's poetical world has outlived Plato's philosophical Republic.

Poetry then is an imitation of nature, but the imagination and the passions are a part of man's nature. We shape things according to our wishes and fancies, without poetry; but poetry is the most emphatical language that can be found for those creations of the mind 'which ecstacy is very cunning in.' Neither a mere description of natural objects, nor a mere delineation of natural feelings, however distinct or forcible, constitutes the ultimate end and aim of poetry, without the heightenings of the imagination. The light of poetry is not only a direct but also a reflected light, that while it shews us the object, throws a sparkling radiance on all around it: the flame of the passions, communicated to the imagination, reveals to us, as with a flash of lightning, the inmost recesses of thought, and penetrates our whole being. Poetry represents forms chiefly as they suggest other forms; feelings, as they suggest forms or other feelings. Poetry puts a spirit of life and motion into the universe. It describes the flowing, not the fixed. It does not define the limits of sense, or analyze the distinctions of the understanding, but signifies the excess of the imagination beyond the actual or ordinary impression of any object or feeling. The poetical impression of any object is that uneasy, exquisite sense of beauty or power that cannot be contained within itself; that is impatient of all limit; that (as flame bends to flame) strives to link itself to some other image of kindred beauty or grandeur; to enshrine itself, as it were, in the highest forms of fancy, and to relieve the aching sense of pleasure by expressing it in the boldest manner, and by the most striking examples of the same quality in other instances. Poetry, according to Lord Bacon, for this reason, 'has something divine in it, because it raises the mind and hurries it into sublimity, by conforming the shows of things to the desires of the soul, instead of subjecting the soul to external things,

as reason and history do.' It is strictly the language of the imagination; and the imagination is that faculty which represents objects, not as they are in themselves, but as they are moulded by other thoughts and feelings, into an infinite variety of shapes and combinations of power. This language is not the less true to nature, because it is false in point of fact; but so much the more true and natural, if it conveys the impression which the object under the influence of passion makes on the mind. Let an object, for instance, be presented to the senses in a state of agitation or fear—and the imagination will distort or magnify the object, and convert it into the likeness of whatever is most proper to encourage the fear. 'Our eyes are made the fools' of our other faculties. This is the universal law of the imagination,

> 'That if it would but apprehend some joy,
> It comprehends some bringer of that joy:
> Or in the night imagining some fear,
> How easy is each bush suppos'd a bear!'

When Iachimo says of Imogen,

> '——The flame o' th' taper
> Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids
> To see the enclosed lights'—

this passionate interpretation of the motion of the flame to accord with the speaker's own feelings, is true poetry. The lover, equally with the poet, speaks of the auburn tresses of his mistress as locks of shining gold, because the least tinge of yellow in the hair has, from novelty and a sense of personal beauty, a more lustrous effect to the imagination than the purest gold. We compare a man of gigantic stature to a tower: not that he is any thing like so large, but because the excess of his size beyond what we are accustomed to expect, or the usual size of things of the same class, produces by contrast a greater feeling of magnitude and ponderous strength than another object of ten times the same dimensions. The intensity of the feeling makes up for the disproportion of the objects. Things are equal to the imagination, which have the power of affecting the mind with an equal degree of terror, admiration, delight, or love. When Lear calls upon the heavens to avenge his cause, 'for they are old like him,' there is nothing extravagant or impious in this sublime identification of his age with theirs; for there is no other image which could in justice to the agonising sense of his wrongs and his despair!

Poetry is the high-wrought enthusiasm of fancy and feeling. As dodescribing natural objects, it impregnates sensible impressions with

the forms of fancy, so it describes the feelings of pleasure or pain, by blending them with the strongest movements of passion, and the most striking forms of nature. Tragic poetry, which is the most impassioned species of it, strives to carry on the feeling to the utmost point of sublimity or pathos, by all the force of comparison or contrast; loses the sense of present suffering in the imaginary exaggeration of it; exhausts the terror or pity by an unlimited indulgence of it; grapples with impossibilities in its desperate impatience of restraint; throws us back upon the past, forward into the future; brings every moment of our being or object of nature in startling review before us; and in the rapid whirl of events, lifts us from the depths of woe to the highest contemplations on human life. When Lear says of Edgar, 'Nothing but his unkind daughters could have brought him to this;' what a bewildered amazement, what a wrench of the imagination, that cannot be brought to conceive of any other cause of misery than that which has bowed it down, and absorbs all other sorrow in its own! His sorrow, like a flood, supplies the sources of all other sorrow. Again, when he exclaims in the mad scene, 'The little dogs and all, Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me!' it is passion lending occasion to imagination to make every creature in league against him, conjuring up ingratitude and insult in their least looked-for and most galling shapes, searching every thread and fibre of his heart, and finding out the last remaining image of respect or attachment in the bottom of his breast, only to torture and kill it! In like manner, the 'So I am' of Cordelia gushes from her heart like a torrent of tears, relieving it of a weight of love and of supposed ingratitude, which had pressed upon it for years. What a fine return of the passion upon itself is that in Othello—with what a mingled agony of regret and despair he clings to the last traces of departed happiness—when he exclaims,

——'Oh now, for ever
Farewel the tranquil mind. Farewel content;
Farewel the plumed troops and the big war,
That make ambition virtue! Oh farewel!
Farewel the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war:
And O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
Th' immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewel! Othello's occupation's gone!'

How his passion lashes itself up and swells and rages like a tide in its

sounding course, when in answer to the doubts expressed of his returning love, he says,

> 'Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea,
> Whose icy current and compulsive course
> Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
> To the Propontic and the Hellespont:
> Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
> Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
> Till that a capable and wide revenge
> Swallow them up.'—

The climax of his expostulation afterwards with Desdemona is at that line,

> 'But there where I had garner'd up my heart,
> To be discarded thence!'—

One mode in which the dramatic exhibition of passion excites our sympathy without raising our disgust is, that in proportion as it sharpens the edge of calamity and disappointment, it strengthens the desire of good. It enhances our consciousness of the blessing, by making us sensible of the magnitude of the loss. The storm of passion lays bare and shews us the rich depths of the human soul: the whole of our existence, the sum total of our passions and pursuits, of that which we desire and that which we dread, is brought before us by contrast; the action and re-action are equal; the keenness of immediate suffering only gives us a more intense aspiration after, and a more intimate participation with the antagonist world of good; makes us drink deeper of the cup of human life; tugs at the heart-strings; loosens the pressure about them; and calls the springs of thought and feeling into play with tenfold force.

Impassioned poetry is an emanation of the moral and intellectual part of our nature, as well as of the sensitive—of the desire to know, the will to act, and the power to feel; and ought to appeal to these different parts of our constitution, in order to be perfect. The domestic or prose tragedy, which is thought to be the most natural, is in this sense the least so, because it appeals almost exclusively to one of these faculties, our sensibility. The tragedies of Moore and Lillo, for this reason, however affecting at the time, oppress and lie like a dead weight upon the mind, a load of misery which it is unable to throw off: the tragedy of Shakspeare, which is true poetry, stirs our inmost affections; abstracts evil from itself by combining it with all the forms of imagination, and with the deepest workings of the heart, and rouses the whole man within us.

The pleasure, however, derived from tragic poetry, is not any thing peculiar to it as poetry, as a fictitious and fanciful thing. It is not an anomaly of the imagination. It has its source and ground-work in the common love of strong excitement. As Mr. Burke observes, people flock to see a tragedy; but if there were a public execution in the next street, the theatre would very soon be empty. It is not then the difference between fiction and reality that solves the difficulty. Children are satisfied with the stories of ghosts and witches in plain prose: nor do the hawkers of full, true, and particular accounts of murders and executions about the streets, find it necessary to have them turned into penny ballads, before they can dispose of these interesting and authentic documents. The grave politician drives a thriving trade of abuse and calumnies poured out against those whom he makes his enemies for no other end than that he may live by them. The popular preacher makes less frequent mention of heaven than of hell. Oaths and nicknames are only a more vulgar sort of poetry or rhetoric. We are as fond of indulging our violent passions as of reading a description of those of others. We are as prone to make a torment of our fears, as to luxuriate in our hopes of good. If it be asked, Why we do so? the best answer will be, Because we cannot help it. The sense of power is as strong a principle in the mind as the love of pleasure. Objects of terror and pity exercise the same despotic control over it as those of love or beauty. It is as natural to hate as to love, to despise as to admire, to express our hatred or contempt, as our love or admiration.

> 'Masterless passion sways us to the mood
> Of what it likes or loathes.'

Not that we like what we loathe; but we like to indulge our hatred and scorn of it; to dwell upon it, to exasperate our idea of it by every refinement of ingenuity and extravagance of illustration; to make it a bugbear to ourselves, to point it out to others in all the splendour of deformity, to embody it to the senses, to stigmatise it by name, to grapple with it in thought, in action, to sharpen our intellect, to arm our will against it, to know the worst we have to contend with, and to contend with it to the utmost. Poetry is only the highest eloquence of passion, the most vivid form of expression that can be given to our conception of any thing, whether pleasurable or painful, mean or dignified, delightful or distressing. It is the perfect coincidence of the image and the words with the feeling we have, and of which we cannot get rid in any other way, that gives an instant 'satisfaction to the thought.' This is equally the origin of wit and

fancy, of comedy and tragedy, of the sublime and pathetic. When Pope says of the Lord Mayor's shew,—

> 'Now night descending, the proud scene is o'er,
> But lives in Settle's numbers one day more!'

—when Collins makes Danger, 'with limbs of giant mould,'

> ——'Throw him on the steep
> Of some loose hanging rock asleep:'

when Lear calls out in extreme anguish,

> 'Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
> How much more hideous shew'st in a child
> Than the sea-monster!'

—the passion of contempt in the one case, of terror in the other, and of indignation in the last, is perfectly satisfied. We see the thing ourselves, and shew it to others as we feel it to exist, and as, in spite of ourselves, we are compelled to think of it. The imagination, by thus embodying and turning them to shape, gives an obvious relief to the indistinct and importunate cravings of the will.—We do not wish the thing to be so; but we wish it to appear such as it is. For knowledge is conscious power; and the mind is no longer, in this case, the dupe, though it may be the victim of vice or folly.

Poetry is in all its shapes the language of the imagination and the passions, of fancy and will. Nothing, therefore, can be more absurd than the outcry which has been sometimes raised by frigid and pedantic critics, for reducing the language of poetry to the standard of common sense and reason: for the end and use of poetry, 'both at the first and now, was and is to hold the mirror up to nature,' seen through the medium of passion and imagination, not divested of that medium by means of literal truth or abstract reason. The painter of history might as well be required to represent the face of a person who has just trod upon a serpent with the still-life expression of a common portrait, as the poet to describe the most striking and vivid impressions which things can be supposed to make upon the mind, in the language of common conversation. Let who will strip nature of the colours and the shapes of fancy, the poet is not bound to do so; the impressions of common sense and strong imagination, that is, of passion and indifference, cannot be the same, and they must have a separate language to do justice to either. Objects must strike differently upon the mind, independently of what they are in themselves, as long as we have a different interest in them, as we see them in a different point of view, nearer or at a greater distance (morally or physically

speaking) from novelty, from old acquaintance, from our ignorance of them, from our fear of their consequences, from contrast, from unexpected likeness. We can no more take away the faculty of the imagination, than we can see all objects without light or shade. Some things must dazzle us by their preternatural light; others must hold us in suspense, and tempt our curiosity to explore their obscurity. Those who would dispel these various illusions, to give us their drab-coloured creation in their stead, are not very wise. Let the naturalist, if he will, catch the glow-worm, carry it home with him in a box, and find it next morning nothing but a little grey worm; let the poet or the lover of poetry visit it at evening, when beneath the scented hawthorn and the crescent moon it has built itself a palace of emerald light. This is also one part of nature, one appearance which the glow-worm presents, and that not the least interesting; so poetry is one part of the history of the human mind, though it is neither science nor philosophy. It cannot be concealed, however, that the progress of knowledge and refinement has a tendency to circumscribe the limits of the imagination, and to clip the wings of poetry. The province of the imagination is principally visionary, the unknown and undefined: the understanding restores things to their natural boundaries, and strips them of their fanciful pretensions. Hence the history of religious and poetical enthusiasm is much the same; and both have received a sensible shock from the progress of experimental philosophy. It is the undefined and uncommon that gives birth and scope to the imagination; we can only fancy what we do not know. As in looking into the mazes of a tangled wood we fill them with what shapes we please, with ravenous beasts, with caverns vast, and drear enchantments, so in our ignorance of the world about us, we make gods or devils of the first object we see, and set no bounds to the wilful suggestions of our hopes and fears.

> 'And visions, as poetic eyes avow,
> Hang on each leaf and cling to every bough.'

There can never be another Jacob's dream. Since that time, the heavens have gone farther off, and grown astronomical. They have become averse to the imagination, nor will they return to us on the squares of the distances, or on Doctor Chalmers's Discourses. Rembrandt's picture brings the matter nearer to us.—It is not only the progress of mechanical knowledge, but the necessary advances of civilization that are unfavourable to the spirit of poetry. We not only stand in less awe of the preternatural world, but we can calculate more surely, and look with more indifference, upon the regular routine of this. The heroes of the fabulous ages rid the world of monsters

and giants. At present we are less exposed to the vicissitudes of good or evil, to the incursions of wild beasts or 'bandit fierce,' or to the unmitigated fury of the elements. The time has been that 'our fell of hair would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir as life were in it.' But the police spoils all; and we now hardly so much as dream of a midnight murder. Macbeth is only tolerated in this country for the sake of the music; and in the United States of America, where the philosophical principles of government are carried still farther in theory and practice, we find that the Beggar's Opera is hooted from the stage. Society, by degrees, is constructed into a machine that carries us safely and insipidly from one end of life to the other, in a very comfortable prose style.

> 'Obscurity her curtain round them drew,
> And siren Sloth a dull quietus sung.'

The remarks which have been here made, would, in some measure, lead to a solution of the question of the comparative merits of painting and poetry. I do not mean to give any preference, but it should seem that the argument which has been sometimes set up, that painting must affect the imagination more strongly, because it represents the image more distinctly, is not well founded. We may assume without much temerity, that poetry is more poetical than painting. When artists or connoisseurs talk on stilts about the poetry of painting, they shew that they know little about poetry, and have little love for the art. Painting gives the object itself; poetry what it implies. Painting embodies what a thing contains in itself: poetry suggests what exists out of it, in any manner connected with it. But this last is the proper province of the imagination. Again, as it relates to passion, painting gives the event, poetry the progress of events: but it is during the progress, in the interval of expectation and suspense, while our hopes and fears are strained to the highest pitch of breathless agony, that the pinch of the interest lies.

> 'Between the acting of a dreadful thing
> And the first motion, all the interim is
> Like a phantasma or a hideous dream.
> The mortal instruments are then in council;
> And the state of man, like to a little kingdom,
> Suffers then the nature of an insurrection.'

But by the time that the picture is painted, all is over. Faces are the best part of a picture; but even faces are not what we chiefly remember in what interests us most.—But it may be asked then, Is

there anything better than Claude Lorraine's landscapes, than Titian's portraits, than Raphael's cartoons, or the Greek statues? Of the two first I shall say nothing, as they are evidently picturesque, rather than imaginative. Raphael's cartoons are certainly the finest comments that ever were made on the Scriptures. Would their effect be the same, if we were not acquainted with the text? But the New Testament existed before the cartoons. There is one subject of which there is no cartoon, Christ washing the feet of the disciples the night before his death. But that chapter does not need a commentary! It is for want of some such resting place for the imagination that the Greek statues are little else than specious forms. They are marble to the touch and to the heart. They have not an informing principle within them. In their faultless excellence they appear sufficient to themselves. By their beauty they are raised above the frailties of passion or suffering. By their beauty they are deified. But they are not objects of religious faith to us, and their forms are a reproach to common humanity. They seem to have no sympathy with us, and not to want our admiration.

Poetry in its matter and form is natural imagery or feeling, combined with passion and fancy. In its mode of conveyance, it combines the ordinary use of language with musical expression. There is a question of long standing, in what the essence of poetry consists; or what it is that determines why one set of ideas should be expressed in prose, another in verse. Milton has told us his idea of poetry in a single line—

> 'Thoughts that voluntary move
> Harmonious numbers.'

As there are certain sounds that excite certain movements, and the song and dance go together, so there are, no doubt, certain thoughts that lead to certain tones of voice, or modulations of sound, and change 'the words of Mercury into the songs of Apollo.' There is a striking instance of this adaptation of the movement of sound and rhythm to the subject, in Spenser's description of the Satyrs accompanying Una to the cave of Sylvanus.

> 'So from the ground she fearless doth arise
> And walketh forth without suspect of crime.
> They, all as glad as birds of joyous prime,
> Thence lead her forth, about her dancing round,
> Shouting and singing all a shepherd's rhyme;
> And with green branches strewing all the ground,
> Do worship her as queen with olive garland crown'd.

And all the way their merry pipes they sound,
  That all the woods and doubled echoes ring;
And with their horned feet do wear the ground,
  Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant spring;
So towards old Sylvanus they her bring,
  Who with the noise awaked, cometh out.'

Faery Queen, b. i. c. vi.

On the contrary, there is nothing either musical or natural in the ordinary construction of language. It is a thing altogether arbitrary and conventional. Neither in the sounds themselves, which are the voluntary signs of certain ideas, nor in their grammatical arrangements in common speech, is there any principle of natural imitation, or correspondence to the individual ideas, or to the tone of feeling with which they are conveyed to others. The jerks, the breaks, the inequalities, and harshnesses of prose, are fatal to the flow of a poetical imagination, as a jolting road or a stumbling horse disturbs the reverie of an absent man. But poetry makes these odds all even. It is the music of language, answering to the music of the mind, untying as it were 'the secret soul of harmony.' Wherever any object takes such a hold of the mind as to make us dwell upon it, and brood over it, melting the heart in tenderness, or kindling it to a sentiment of enthusiasm;—wherever a movement of imagination or passion is impressed on the mind, by which it seeks to prolong and repeat the emotion, to bring all other objects into accord with it, and to give the same movement of harmony, sustained and continuous, or gradually varied according to the occasion, to the sounds that express it—this is poetry. The musical in sound is the sustained and continuous; the musical in thought is the sustained and continuous also. There is a near connection between music and deep-rooted passion. Mad people sing. As often as articulation passes naturally into intonation, there poetry begins. Where one idea gives a tone and colour to others, where one feeling melts others into it, there can be no reason why the same principle should not be extended to the sounds by which the voice utters these emotions of the soul, and blends syllables and lines into each other. It is to supply the inherent defect of harmony in the customary mechanism of language, to make the sound an echo to the sense, when the sense becomes a sort of echo to itself—to mingle the tide of verse, 'the golden cadences of poetry,' with the tide of feeling, flowing and murmuring as it flows—in short, to take the language of the imagination from off the ground, and enable it to spread its wings where it may indulge its own impulses—

'Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air—'

without being stopped, or fretted, or diverted with the abruptnesses and petty obstacles, and discordant flats and sharps of prose, that poetry was invented. It is to common language, what springs are to a carriage, or wings to feet. In ordinary speech we arrive at a certain harmony by the modulations of the voice: in poetry the same thing is done systematically by a regular collocation of syllables. It has been well observed, that every one who declaims warmly, or grows intent upon a subject, rises into a sort of blank verse or measured prose. The merchant, as described in Chaucer, went on his way 'sounding always the increase of his winning.' Every prose-writer has more or less of rhythmical adaptation, except poets, who, when deprived of the regular mechanism of verse, seem to have no principle of modulation left in their writings.

An excuse might be made for rhyme in the same manner. It is but fair that the ear should linger on the sounds that delight it, or avail itself of the same brilliant coincidence and unexpected recurrence of syllables, that have been displayed in the invention and collocation of images. It is allowed that rhyme assists the memory; and a man of wit and shrewdness has been heard to say, that the only four good lines of poetry are the well-known ones which tell the number of days in the months of the year.

'Thirty days hath September,' &c.

But if the jingle of names assists the memory, may it not also quicken the fancy? and there are other things worth having at our fingers' ends, besides the contents of the almanac.—Pope's versification is tiresome, from its excessive sweetness and uniformity. Shakspeare's blank verse is the perfection of dramatic dialogue.

All is not poetry that passes for such: nor does verse make the whole difference between poetry and prose. The Iliad does not cease to be poetry in a literal translation; and Addison's Campaign has been very properly denominated a Gazette in rhyme. Common prose differs from poetry, as treating for the most part either of such trite, familiar, and irksome matters of fact, as convey no extraordinary impulse to the imagination, or else of such difficult and laborious processes of the understanding, as do not admit of the wayward or violent movements either of the imagination or the passions.

I will mention three works which come as near to poetry as possible without absolutely being so, namely, the Pilgrim's Progress, Robinson Crusoe, and the Tales of Boccaccio. Chaucer and Dryden have translated some of the last into English rhyme, but the essence and the power of poetry was there before. That which lifts the spirit above the earth, which draws the soul out of itself with

indescribable longings, is poetry in kind, and generally fit to become so in name, by being 'married to immortal verse.' If it is of the essence of poetry to strike and fix the imagination, whether we will or no, to make the eye of childhood glisten with the starting tear, to be never thought of afterwards with indifference, John Bunyan and Daniel Defoe may be permitted to pass for poets in their way. The mixture of fancy and reality in the Pilgrim's Progress was never equalled in any allegory. His pilgrims walk above the earth, and yet are on it. What zeal, what beauty, what truth of fiction! What deep feeling in the description of Christian's swimming across the water at last, and in the picture of the Shining Ones within the gates, with wings at their backs and garlands on their heads, who are to wipe all tears from his eyes! The writer's genius, though not 'dipped in dews of Castalie,' was baptised with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The prints in this book are no small part of it. If the confinement of Philoctetes in the island of Lemnos was a subject for the most beautiful of all the Greek tragedies, what shall we say to Robinson Crusoe in his? Take the speech of the Greek hero on leaving his cave, beautiful as it is, and compare it with the reflections of the English adventurer in his solitary place of confinement. The thoughts of home, and of all from which he is for ever cut off, swell and press against his bosom, as the heaving ocean rolls its ceaseless tide against the rocky shore, and the very beatings of his heart become audible in the eternal silence that surrounds him. Thus he says,

'As I walked about, either in my hunting, or for viewing the country, the anguish of my soul at my condition would break out upon me on a sudden, and my very heart would die within me to think of the woods, the mountains, the deserts I was in; and how I was a prisoner, locked up with the eternal bars and bolts of the ocean, in an uninhabited wilderness, without redemption. In the midst of the greatest composures of my mind, this would break out upon me like a storm, and make me wring my hands, and weep like a child. Sometimes it would take me in the middle of my work, and I would immediately sit down and sigh, and look upon the ground for an hour or two together, and this was still worse to me, for if I could burst into tears or vent myself in words, it would go off, and the grief having exhausted itself would abate.' P. 50.

The story of his adventures would not make a poem like the Odyssey, it is true; but the relator had the true genius of a poet. It has been made a question whether Richardson's romances are poetry; and the answer perhaps is, that they are not poetry, because they are not romance. The interest is worked up to an inconceivable height; but it is by an infinite number of little things, by

incessant labour and calls upon the attention, by a repetition of blows that have no rebound in them. The sympathy excited is not a voluntary contribution, but a tax. Nothing is unforced and spontaneous. There is a want of elasticity and motion. The story does not 'give an echo to the seat where love is throned.' The heart does not answer of itself like a chord in music. The fancy does not run on before the writer with breathless expectation, but is dragged along with an infinite number of pins and wheels, like those with which the Lilliputians dragged Gulliver pinioned to the royal palace.—Sir Charles Grandison is a coxcomb. What sort of a figure would he cut, translated into an epic poem, by the side of Achilles? Clarissa, the divine Clarissa, is too interesting by half. She is interesting in her ruffles, in her gloves, her samplers, her aunts and uncles—she is interesting in all that is uninteresting. Such things, however intensely they may be brought home to us, are not conductors to the imagination. There is infinite truth and feeling in Richardson; but it is extracted from a *caput mortuum* of circumstances: it does not evaporate of itself. His poetical genius is like Ariel confined in a pine-tree, and requires an artificial process to let it out. Shakspeare says—

> 'Our poesy is as a gum
> Which issues whence 'tis nourished, our gentle flame
> Provokes itself, and like the current flies
> Each bound it chafes.'[1]

I shall conclude this general account with some remarks on four of the principal works of poetry in the world, at different periods of history—Homer, the Bible, Dante, and let me add, Ossian. In Homer, the principle of action or life is predominant; in the Bible, the principle of faith and the idea of Providence; Dante is a personification of blind will; and in Ossian we see the decay of life, and the lag end of the world. Homer's poetry is the heroic: it is full of life and action: it is bright as the day, strong as a river. In the vigour of his intellect, he grapples with all the objects of nature,

[1] Burke's writings are not poetry, notwithstanding the vividness of the fancy, because the subject matter is abstruse and dry, not natural, but artificial. The difference between poetry and eloquence is, that the one is the eloquence of the imagination, and the other of the understanding. Eloquence tries to persuade the will, and convince the reason: poetry produces its effect by instantaneous sympathy. Nothing is a subject for poetry that admits of a dispute. Poets are in general bad prose-writers, because their images, though fine in themselves, are not to the purpose, and do not carry on the argument. The French poetry wants the forms of the imagination. It is didactic more than dramatic. And some of our own poetry which has been most admired, is only poetry in the rhyme, and in the studied use of poetic diction.

and enters into all the relations of social life. He saw many countries, and the manners of many men; and he has brought them all together in his poem. He describes his heroes going to battle with a prodigality of life, arising from an exuberance of animal spirits: we see them before us, their number, and their order of battle, poured out upon the plain 'all plumed like estriches, like eagles newly bathed, wanton as goats, wild as young bulls, youthful as May, and gorgeous as the sun at midsummer,' covered with glittering armour, with dust and blood; while the Gods quaff their nectar in golden cups, or mingle in the fray; and the old men assembled on the walls of Troy rise up with reverence as Helen passes by them. The multitude of things in Homer is wonderful; their splendour, their truth, their force, and variety. His poetry is, like his religion, the poetry of number and form: he describes the bodies as well as the souls of men.

The poetry of the Bible is that of imagination and of faith: it is abstract and disembodied: it is not the poetry of form, but of power; not of multitude, but of immensity. It does not divide into many, but aggrandizes into one. Its ideas of nature are like its ideas of God. It is not the poetry of social life, but of solitude: each man seems alone in the world, with the original forms of nature, the rocks, the earth, and the sky. It is not the poetry of action or heroic enterprise, but of faith in a supreme Providence, and resignation to the power that governs the universe. As the idea of God was removed farther from humanity, and a scattered polytheism, it became more profound and intense, as it became more universal, for the Infinite is present to every thing: 'If we fly into the uttermost parts of the earth, it is there also; if we turn to the east or the west, we cannot escape from it.' Man is thus aggrandised in the image of his Maker. The history of the patriarchs is of this kind; they are founders of a chosen race of people, the inheritors of the earth; they exist in the generations which are to come after them. Their poetry, like their religious creed, is vast, unformed, obscure, and infinite; a vision is upon it—an invisible hand is suspended over it. The spirit of the Christian religion consists in the glory hereafter to be revealed; but in the Hebrew dispensation, Providence took an immediate share in the affairs of this life. Jacob's dream arose out of this intimate communion between heaven and earth: it was this that let down, in the sight of the youthful patriarch, a golden ladder from the sky to the earth, with angels ascending and descending upon it, and shed a light upon the lonely place, which can never pass away. The story of Ruth, again, is as if all the depth of natural affection in the human race was involved in her breast. There are descriptions in

the book of Job more prodigal of imagery, more intense in passion, than any thing in Homer, as that of the state of his prosperity, and of the vision that came upon him by night. The metaphors in the Old Testament are more boldly figurative. Things were collected more into masses, and gave a greater *momentum* to the imagination.

Dante was the father of modern poetry, and he may therefore claim a place in this connection. His poem is the first great step from Gothic darkness and barbarism; and the struggle of thought in it to burst the thraldom in which the human mind had been so long held, is felt in every page. He stood bewildered, not appalled, on that dark shore which separates the ancient and the modern world; and saw the glories of antiquity dawning through the abyss of time, while revelation opened its passage to the other world. He was lost in wonder at what had been done before him, and he dared to emulate it. Dante seems to have been indebted to the Bible for the gloomy tone of his mind, as well as for the prophetic fury which exalts and kindles his poetry; but he is utterly unlike Homer. His genius is not a sparkling flame, but the sullen heat of a furnace. He is power, passion, self-will personified. In all that relates to the descriptive or fanciful part of poetry, he bears no comparison to many who had gone before, or who have come after him; but there is a gloomy abstraction in his conceptions, which lies like a dead weight upon the mind; a benumbing stupor, a breathless awe, from the intensity of the impression; a terrible obscurity, like that which oppresses us in dreams; an identity of interest, which moulds every object to its own purposes, and clothes all things with the passions and imaginations of the human soul,—that make amends for all other deficiencies. The immediate objects he presents to the mind are not much in themselves, they want grandeur, beauty, and order; but they become every thing by the force of the character he impresses upon them. His mind lends its own power to the objects which it contemplates, instead of borrowing it from them. He takes advantage even of the nakedness and dreary vacuity of his subject. His imagination peoples the shades of death, and broods over the silent air. He is the severest of all writers, the most hard and impenetrable, the most opposite to the flowery and glittering; who relies most on his own power, and the sense of it in others, and who leaves most room to the imagination of his readers. Dante's only endeavour is to interest; and he interests by exciting our sympathy with the emotion by which he is himself possessed. He does not place before us the objects by which that emotion has been created; but he seizes on the attention, by shewing us the effect they produce on his feelings; and his poetry accordingly gives the same thrilling and overwhelming sensation,

which is caught by gazing on the face of a person who has seen some object of horror. The improbability of the events, the abruptness and monotony in the Inferno, are excessive: but the interest never flags, from the continued earnestness of the author's mind. Dante's great power is in combining internal feelings with external objects. Thus the gate of hell, on which that withering inscription is written, seems to be endowed with speech and consciousness, and to utter its dread warning, not without a sense of mortal woes. This author habitually unites the absolutely local and individual with the greatest wildness and mysticism. In the midst of the obscure and shadowy regions of the lower world, a tomb suddenly rises up with the inscription, 'I am the tomb of Pope Anastasius the Sixth': and half the personages whom he has crowded into the Inferno are his own acquaintance. All this, perhaps, tends to heighten the effect by the bold intermixture of realities, and by an appeal, as it were, to the individual knowledge and experience of the reader. He affords few subjects for picture. There is, indeed, one gigantic one, that of Count Ugolino, of which Michael Angelo made a bas-relief, and which Sir Joshua Reynolds ought not to have painted.

Another writer whom I shall mention last, and whom I cannot persuade myself to think a mere modern in the groundwork, is Ossian. He is a feeling and a name that can never be destroyed in the minds of his readers. As Homer is the first vigour and lustihed, Ossian is the decay and old age of poetry. He lives only in the recollection and regret of the past. There is one impression which he conveys more entirely than all other poets, namely, the sense of privation, the loss of all things, of friends, of good name, of country—he is even without God in the world. He converses only with the spirits of the departed; with the motionless and silent clouds. The cold moonlight sheds its faint lustre on his head; the fox peeps out of the ruined tower; the thistle waves its beard to the wandering gale; and the strings of his harp seem, as the hand of age, as the tale of other times, passes over them, to sigh and rustle like the dry reeds in the winter's wind! The feeling of cheerless desolation, of the loss of the pith and sap of existence, of the annihilation of the substance, and the clinging to the shadow of all things as in a mock-embrace, is here perfect. In this way, the lamentation of Selma for the loss of Salgar is the finest of all. If it were indeed possible to shew that this writer was nothing, it would only be another instance of mutability, another blank made, another void left in the heart, another confirmation of that feeling which makes him so often complain, 'Roll on, ye dark brown years, ye bring no joy on your wing to Ossian!'

ON CHAUCER AND SPENSER

LECTURE II

ON CHAUCER AND SPENSER

Having, in the former Lecture, given some account of the nature of poetry in general, I shall proceed, in the next place, to a more particular consideration of the genius and history of English poetry. I shall take, as the subject of the present lecture, Chaucer and Spenser, two out of four of the greatest names in poetry, which this country has to boast. Both of them, however, were much indebted to the early poets of Italy, and may be considered as belonging, in a certain degree, to the same school. The freedom and copiousness with which our most original writers, in former periods, availed themselves of the productions of their predecessors, frequently transcribing whole passages, without scruple or acknowledgment, may appear contrary to the etiquette of modern literature, when the whole stock of poetical common-places has become public property, and no one is compelled to trade upon any particular author. But it is not so much a subject of wonder, at a time when to read and write was of itself an honorary distinction, when learning was almost as great a rarity as genius, and when in fact those who first transplanted the beauties of other languages into their own, might be considered as public benefactors, and the founders of a national literature.—There are poets older than Chaucer, and in the interval between him and Spenser; but their genius was not such as to place them in any point of comparison with either of these celebrated men; and an inquiry into their particular merits or defects might seem rather to belong to the province of the antiquary, than be thought generally interesting to the lovers of poetry in the present day.

Chaucer (who has been very properly considered as the father of English poetry) preceded Spenser by two centuries. He is supposed to have been born in London, in the year 1328, during the reign of Edward III. and to have died in 1400, at the age of seventy-two. He received a learned education at one, or at both of the universities, and travelled early into Italy, where he became thoroughly imbued with the spirit and excellences of the great Italian poets and prose-writers, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccace; and is said to have had a personal interview with one of these, Petrarch. He was connected, by marriage, with the famous John of Gaunt, through whose interest he was introduced into several public employments. Chaucer was an active partisan, a religious reformer, and from the share he took in some disturbances, on one occasion, he was obliged to fly the country.

On his return, he was imprisoned, and made his peace with government, as it is said, by a discovery of his associates. Fortitude does not appear, at any time, to have been the distinguishing virtue of poets —There is, however, an obvious similarity between the practical turn of Chaucer's mind and restless impatience of his character, and the tone of his writings. Yet it would be too much to attribute the one to the other as cause and effect: for Spenser, whose poetical temperament was an effeminate as Chaucer's was stern and masculine, was equally engaged in public affairs, and had mixed equally in the great world. So much does native disposition predominate over accidental circumstances, moulding them to its previous bent and purposes! For while Chaucer's intercourse with the busy world, and collision with the actual passions and conflicting interests of others, seemed to brace the sinews of his understanding, and gave to his writings the air of a man who describes persons and things that he had known and been intimately concerned in; the same opportunities, operating on a differently constituted frame, only served to alienate Spenser's mind the more from the 'close-pent up' scenes of ordinary life, and to make him 'rive their concealing continents,' to give himself up to the unrestrained indulgence of 'flowery tenderness.'

It is not possible for any two writers to be more opposite in this respect. Spenser delighted in luxurious enjoyment; Chaucer, in severe activity of mind. As Spenser was the most romantic and visionary, Chaucer was the most practical of all the great poets, the most a man of business and the world. His poetry reads like history. Every thing has a downright reality; at least in the relator's mind. A simile, or a sentiment, is as if it were given in upon evidence. Thus he describes Cressid's first avowal of her love.

'And as the new abashed nightingale,
That stinteth first when she beginneth sing,
When that she heareth any herde's tale,
Or in the hedges any wight stirring,
And after, sicker, doth her voice outring;
Right so Cresseide, when that her dread stent,
Open'd her heart, and told him her intent.'

This is so true and natural, and beautifully simple, that the two things seem identified with each other. Again, it is said in the Knight's Tale—

'Thus passeth yere by yere, and day by day,
Till it felle ones in a morwe of May,
That Emelie that fayrer was to sene
Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene;

And fresher than the May with floures newe,
For with the rose-colour strof hire hewe:
I n'ot which was the finer of hem two.'

This scrupulousness about the literal preference, as if some question of matter of fact was at issue, is remarkable. I might mention that other, where he compares the meeting between Palamon and Arcite to a hunter waiting for a lion in a gap;—

'That stondeth at a gap with a spere,
Whan hunted is the lion or the bere,
And hereth him come rushing in the greves,
And breking both the boughes and the leves:'—

or that still finer one of Constance, when she is condemned to death:—

'Have ye not seen somtime a pale face
(Among a prees) of him that hath been lad
Toward his deth, wheras he geteth no grace,
And swiche a colour in his face hath had,
Men mighten know him that was so bestad,
Amonges all the faces in that route;
So stant Custance, and loketh hire aboute.'

The beauty, the pathos here does not seem to be of the poet's seeking, but a part of the necessary texture of the fable. He speaks of what he wishes to describe with the accuracy, the discrimination of one who relates what has happened to himself, or has had the best information from those who have been eye-witnesses of it. The strokes of his pencil always tell. He dwells only on the essential, on that which would be interesting to the persons really concerned: yet as he never omits any material circumstance, he is prolix from the number of points on which he touches, without being diffuse on any one; and is sometimes tedious from the fidelity with which he adheres to his subject, as other writers are from the frequency of their digressions from it. The chain of his story is composed of a number of fine links, closely connected together, and rivetted by a single blow. There is an instance of the minuteness which he introduces into his most serious descriptions in his account of Palamon when left alone in his cell:

'Swiche sorrow he maketh that the grete tour
Resouned of his yelling and clamour:
The pure fetters on his shinnes grete
Were of his bitter salte teres wete.'

The mention of this last circumstance looks like a part of the instructions he had to follow, which he had no discretionary power to leave out or introduce at pleasure. He is contented to find grace and beauty in truth. He exhibits for the most part the naked object, with little drapery thrown over it. His metaphors, which are few, are not for ornament, but use, and as like as possible to the things themselves. He does not affect to shew his power over the reader's mind, but the power which his subject has over his own. The readers of Chaucer's poetry feel more nearly what the persons he describes must have felt, than perhaps those of any other poet. His sentiments are not voluntary effusions of the poet's fancy, but founded on the natural impulses and habitual prejudices of the characters he has to represent. There is an inveteracy of purpose, a sincerity of feeling, which never relaxes or grows vapid, in whatever they do or say. There is no artificial, pompous display, but a strict parsimony of the poet's materials, like the rude simplicity of the age in which he lived. His poetry resembles the root just springing from the ground, rather than the full-blown flower. His muse is no 'babbling gossip of the air,' fluent and redundant; but, like a stammerer, or a dumb person, that has just found the use of speech, crowds many things together with eager haste, with anxious pauses, and fond repetitions to prevent mistake. His words point as an index to the objects, like the eye or finger. There were none of the common-places of poetic diction in our author's time, no reflected lights of fancy, no borrowed roseate tints; he was obliged to inspect things for himself, to look narrowly, and almost to handle the object, as in the obscurity of morning we partly see and partly grope our way; so that his descriptions have a sort of tangible character belonging to them, and produce the effect of sculpture on the mind. Chaucer had an equal eye for truth of nature and discrimination of character; and his interest in what he saw gave new distinctness and force to his power of observation. The picturesque and the dramatic are in him closely blended together, and hardly distinguishable; for he principally describes external appearances as indicating character, as symbols of internal sentiment. There is a meaning in what he sees; and it is this which catches his eye by sympathy. Thus the costume and dress of the Canterbury Pilgrims—of the Knight—the Squire—the Oxford Scholar—the Gap-toothed Wife of Bath, and the rest, speak for themselves. To take one or two of these at random:

> 'There was also a nonne, a Prioresse,
> That of hire smiling was ful simple and coy;
> Hire gretest othe n'as but by seint Eloy:

And she was cleped Madame Eglentine.
Ful wel she sange the service divine
Entuned in hire nose ful swetely;
And Frenche she spake ful fayre and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frenche of Paris was to hire unknowe.
At mete was she wel ytaughte withalle;
She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,
Ne wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe.

* * * * * * *

And sikerly she was of great disport,
And ful plesant, and amiable of port,
And peined hire to contrefeten chere
Of court, and ben estatelich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe if that she saw a mous
Caughte in a trappe, if it were ded or bledde.
Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel brede.
But sore wept she if on of hem were dede,
Or if men smote it with a yerde smert:
And all was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hire wimple ypinched was;
Hire nose tretis; hire eyen grey as glas;
Hire mouth ful smale; and therto soft and red;
But sickerly she hadde a fayre forehed.
It was almost a spanne brode, I trowe.'

A Monk there was, a fayre for the maistrie,
An out-rider, that loved venerie:
A manly man, to ben an abbot able.
Ful many a deinte hors hadde he in stable:
And whan he rode, men mighte his bridel here,
Gingeling in a whistling wind as clere,
And eke as loude, as doth the chapell belle,
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.
The reule of Seint Maure and of Seint Beneit,
Because that it was olde and somdele streit,
This ilke monk lette olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the trace.
He yave not of the text a pulled hen,
That saith, that hunters ben not holy men;—
Therfore he was a prickasoure a right:
Greihoundes he hadde as swift as foul of flight:
Of pricking and of hunting for the hare
Was all his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.

The mention of this last circumstance looks like a part of the instructions he had to follow, which he had no discretionary power to leave out or introduce at pleasure. He is contented to find grace and beauty in truth. He exhibits for the most part the naked object, with little drapery thrown over it. His metaphors, which are few, are not for ornament, but use, and as like as possible to the things themselves. He does not affect to shew his power over the reader's mind, but the power which his subject has over his own. The readers of Chaucer's poetry feel more nearly what the persons he describes must have felt, than perhaps those of any other poet. His sentiments are not voluntary effusions of the poet's fancy, but founded on the natural impulses and habitual prejudices of the characters he has to represent. There is an inveteracy of purpose, a sincerity of feeling, which never relaxes or grows vapid, in whatever they do or say. There is no artificial, pompous display, but a strict parsimony of the poet's materials, like the rude simplicity of the age in which he lived. His poetry resembles the root just springing from the ground, rather than the full-blown flower. His muse is no 'babbling gossip of the air,' fluent and redundant; but, like a stammerer, or a dumb person, that has just found the use of speech, crowds many things together with eager haste, with anxious pauses, and fond repetitions to prevent mistake. His words point as an index to the objects, like the eye or finger. There were none of the common-places of poetic diction in our author's time, no reflected lights of fancy, no borrowed roseate tints; he was obliged to inspect things for himself, to look narrowly, and almost to handle the object, as in the obscurity of morning we partly see and partly grope our way; so that his descriptions have a sort of tangible character belonging to them, and produce the effect of sculpture on the mind. Chaucer had an equal eye for truth of nature and discrimination of character; and his interest in what he saw gave new distinctness and force to his power of observation. The picturesque and the dramatic are in him closely blended together, and hardly distinguishable; for he principally describes external appearances as indicating character, as symbols of internal sentiment. There is a meaning in what he sees; and it is this which catches his eye by sympathy. Thus the costume and dress of the Canterbury Pilgrims—of the Knight—the Squire—the Oxford Scholar—the Gap-toothed Wife of Bath, and the rest, speak for themselves. To take one or two of these at random:

'There was also a nonne, a Prioresse,
That of hire smiling was ful simple and coy;
Hire gretest othe n'as but by seint Eloy:

And she was cleped Madame Eglentine.
Ful wel she sange the service divine
Entuned in hire nose ful swetely;
And Frenche she spake ful fayre and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frenche of Paris was to hire unknowe.
At mete was she wel ytaughte withalle;
She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,
Ne wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe.

* * * * * * *

And sikerly she was of great disport,
And ful plesant, and amiable of port,
And peined hire to contrefeten chere
Of court, and ben estatelich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe if that she saw a mous
Caughte in a trappe, if it were ded or bledde.
Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel brede.
But sore wept she if on of hem were dede,
Or if men smote it with a yerde smert:
And all was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hire wimple ypinched was;
Hire nose tretis; hire eyen grey as glas;
Hire mouth ful smale; and therto soft and red;
But sickerly she hadde a fayre forehed.
It was almost a spanne brode, I trowe.'

A Monk there was, a fayre for the maistrie,
An out-rider, that loved venerie:
A manly man, to ben an abbot able.
Ful many a deinte hors hadde he in stable:
And whan he rode, men mighte his bridel here,
Gingeling in a whistling wind as clere,
And eke as loude, as doth the chapell belle,
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.
The reule of Seint Maure and of Seint Beneit,
Because that it was olde and somdele streit,
This ilke monk lette olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the trace.
He yave not of the text a pulled hen,
That saith, that hunters ben not holy men;—
Therfore he was a prickasoure a right:
Greihoundes he hadde as swift as foul of flight:
Of pricking and of hunting for the hare
Was all his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.

I saw his sleves purfiled at the hond
With gris, and that the finest of the lond.
And for to fasten his hood under his chinne,
He had of gold ywrought a curious pinne:
A love-knotte in the greter end ther was.
His hed was balled, and shone as any glas,
And eke his face, as it hadde ben anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point.
His eyen stepe, and rolling in his hed,
That stemed as a forneis of a led.
His botes souple, his hors in gret estat,
Now certainly he was a fayre prelat.
He was not pale as a forpined gost.
A fat swan loved he best of any rost.
His palfrey was as broune as is a bery.'

The Serjeant at Law is the same identical individual as Lawyer Dowling in Tom Jones, who wished to divide himself into a hundred pieces, to be in a hundred places at once.

'No wher so besy a man as he ther n'as,
And yet he semed besier than he was.'

The Frankelein, in 'whose hous it snewed of mete and drinke'; the Shipman, 'who rode upon a rouncie, as he couthe'; the Doctour of Phisike, 'whose studie was but litel of the Bible'; the Wif of Bath, in

'All whose parish ther was non,
That to the offring before hire shulde gon,
And if ther did, certain so wroth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee;'

—the poure Persone of a toun, 'whose parish was wide, and houses fer asonder'; the Miller, and the Reve, 'a slendre colerike man,' are all of the same stamp. They are every one samples of a kind; abstract definitions of a species. Chaucer, it has been said, numbered the classes of men, as Linnæus numbered the plants. Most of them remain to this day: others that are obsolete, and may well be dispensed with, still live in his descriptions of them. Such is the Sompnoure:

'A Sompnoure was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fire-red cherubinnes face,
For sausefleme he was, with eyen narwe,
As hote he was, and likerous as a sparwe,
With scalled browes blake, and pilled berd:
Of his visage children were sore aferd.

Ther n'as quicksilver, litarge, ne brimston,
Boras, ceruse, ne oile of tartre non,
Ne oinement that wolde clense or bite,
That him might helpen of his whelkes white,
Ne of the knobbes sitting on his chekes.
Wel loved he garlike, onions, and lekes,
And for to drinke strong win as rede as blood.
Than wolde he speke, and crie as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken had the win,
Than wold he speken no word but Latin.
A fewe termes coude he, two or three,
That he had lerned out of som decree;
No wonder is, he heard it all the day.—
  In danger hadde he at his owen gise
The yonge girles of the diocise,
And knew hir conseil, and was of hir rede.
A gerlond hadde he sette upon his hede
As gret as it were for an alestake:
A bokeler hadde he made him of a cake.
With him ther rode a gentil Pardonere—
That hadde a vois as smale as hath a gote.'

It would be a curious speculation (at least for those who think that the characters of men never change, though manners, opinions, and institutions may) to know what has become of this character of the Sompnoure in the present day; whether or not it has any technical representative in existing professions; into what channels and conduits it has withdrawn itself, where it lurks unseen in cunning obscurity, or else shews its face boldly, pampered into all the insolence of office, in some other shape, as it is deterred or encouraged by circumstances. *Chaucer's characters modernised*, upon this principle of historic derivation, would be an useful addition to our knowledge of human nature. But who is there to undertake it?

The descriptions of the equipage, and accoutrements of the two kings of Thrace and Inde, in the Knight's Tale, are as striking and grand, as the others are lively and natural:

'Ther maist thou se coming with Palamon
Licurge himself, the grete king of Trace:
Blake was his berd, and manly was his face.
The cercles of his eyen in his hed
They gloweden betwixen yelwe and red,
And like a griffon loked he about,
With kemped heres on his browes stout;
His limmes gret, his braunes hard and stronge,
His shouldres brode, his armes round and longe.

And as the guise was in his contree,
Ful highe upon a char of gold stood he,
With foure white bolles in the trais.
Instede of cote-armure on his harnais,
With nayles yelwe, and bright as any gold,
He hadde a beres skin, cole-blake for old.
His longe here was kempt behind his bak,
As any ravenes fether it shone for blake.
A wreth of gold arm-gret, of huge weight,
Upon his hed sate full of stones bright,
Of fine rubins and of diamants.
About his char ther wenten white alauns,
Twenty and mo, as gret as any stere,
To hunten at the leon or the dere,
And folwed him, with mosel fast ybound.—
With Arcita, in stories as men find,
The grete Emetrius, the king of Inde,
Upon a stede bay, trapped in stele,
Covered with cloth of gold diapred wele,
Came riding like the god of armes Mars.
His cote-armure was of a cloth of Tars,
Couched with perles, white, and round and grete.
His sadel was of brent gold new ybete;
A mantelet upon his shouldres hanging
Bret-ful of rubies red, as fire sparkling.
His crispe here like ringes was yronne,
And that was yelwe, and glitered as the Sonne.
His nose was high, his eyen bright citrin,
His lippes round, his colour was sanguin,
A fewe fraknes in his face yspreint,
Betwixen yelwe and blake somdel ymeint,
And as a leon he his loking caste.
Of five and twenty yere his age I caste.
His berd was wel begonnen for to spring;
His vois was as a trompe thondering.
Upon his hed he wered of laurer grene
A gerlond freshe and lusty for to sene.
Upon his hond he bare for his deduit
An egle tame, as any lily whit.—
About this king ther ran on every part
Ful many a tame leon and leopart.'

What a deal of terrible beauty there is contained in this description! The imagination of a poet brings such objects before us, as when we look at wild beasts in a menagerie; their claws are pared, their eyes glitter like harmless lightning; but we gaze at them with a pleasing awe, clothed in beauty, formidable in the sense of abstract power.

Chaucer's descriptions of natural scenery possess the same sort of

characteristic excellence, or what might be termed *gusto*. They have a local truth and freshness, which gives the very feeling of the air, the coolness or moisture of the ground. Inanimate objects are thus made to have a fellow-feeling in the interest of the story; and render back the sentiment of the speaker's mind. One of the finest parts of Chaucer is of this mixed kind. It is the beginning of the Flower and the Leaf, where he describes the delight of that young beauty, shrowded in her bower, and listening, in the morning of the year, to the singing of the nightingale; while her joy rises with the rising song, and gushes out afresh at every pause, and is borne along with the full tide of pleasure, and still increases and repeats, and prolongs itself, and knows no ebb. The coolness of the arbour, its retirement, the early time of the day, the sudden starting up of the birds in the neighbouring bushes, the eager delight with which they devour and rend the opening buds and flowers, are expressed with a truth and feeling, which make the whole appear like the recollection of an actual scene:

'Which as me thought was right a pleasing sight,
And eke the briddes song for to here,
Would haue rejoyced any earthly wight,
And I that couth not yet in no manere
Heare the nightingale of all the yeare,
Ful busily herkened with herte and with eare,
If I her voice perceiue coud any where.

And I that all this pleasaunt sight sie,
Thought sodainly I felt so sweet an aire
Of the eglentere, that certainely
There is no herte I deme in such dispaire,
Ne with thoughts froward and contraire,
So ouerlaid, but it should soone haue bote,
If it had ones felt this savour sote.

And as I stood and cast aside mine eie,
I was ware of the fairest medler tree
That ever yet in all my life I sie
As full of blossomes as it might be,
Therein a goldfinch leaping pretile
Fro bough to bough, and as him list he eet
Here and there of buds and floures sweet.

And to the herber side was joyning
This faire tree, of which I haue you told,
And at the last the brid began to sing,
Whan he had eaten what he eat wold,
So passing sweetly, that by manifold
It was more pleasaunt than I coud deuise,
And whan his song was ended in this wise,

The nightingale with so merry a note
Answered him, that all the wood rong
So sodainly, that as it were a sote,
I stood astonied, so was I with the song
Thorow rauished, that till late and long,
I ne wist in what place I was, ne where,
And ayen me thought she song euen by mine ere.

Wherefore I waited about busily
On euery side, if I her might see,
And at the last I gan full well aspie
Where she sat in a fresh grene laurer tree,
On the further side euen right by me,
That gaue so passing a delicious smell,
According to the eglentere full well.

Whereof I had so inly great pleasure,
That as me thought I surely rauished was
Into Paradice, where my desire
Was for to be, and no ferther passe
As for that day, and on the sote grasse,
I sat me downe, for as for mine entent,
The birds song was more conuenient,

And more pleasaunt to me by manifold,
Than meat or drinke, or any other thing,
Thereto the herber was so fresh and cold,
The wholesome sauours eke so comforting,
That as I demed, sith the beginning
Of the world was neur seene or than
So pleasaunt a ground of none earthly man.

And as I sat the birds harkening thus,
Me thought that I heard voices sodainly,
The most sweetest and most delicious
That euer any wight I trow truly
Heard in their life, for the armony
And sweet accord was in so good musike,
That the uoice to angels was most like.'

There is here no affected rapture, no flowery sentiment: the whole is an ebullition of natural delight 'welling out of the heart,' like water from a crystal spring. Nature is the soul of art: there is a strength as well as a simplicity in the imagination that reposes entirely on nature, that nothing else can supply. It was the same trust in nature, and reliance on his subject, which enabled Chaucer to describe the grief and patience of Griselda; the faith of Constance; and the

heroic perseverance of the little child, who, going to school through the streets of Jewry,

> 'Oh *Alma Redemptoris mater*, loudly sung,'

and who after his death still triumphed in his song. Chaucer has more of this deep, internal, sustained sentiment, than any other writer, except Boccaccio. In depth of simple pathos, and intensity of conception, never swerving from his subject, I think no other writer comes near him, not even the Greek tragedians. I wish to be allowed to give one or two instances of what I mean. I will take the following from the Knight's Tale. The distress of Arcite, in consequence of his banishment from his love, is thus described:

> 'Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
> Ful oft a day he swelt and said Alas,
> For sene his lady shall be never mo.
> And shortly to concluden all his wo,
> So mochel sorwe hadde never creature,
> That is or shall be, while the world may dure.
> His slepe, his mete, his drinke is him byraft.
> That lene he wex, and drie as is a shaft.
> His eyen holwe, and grisly to behold,
> His hewe salwe, and pale as ashen cold,
> And solitary he was, and ever alone,
> And wailing all the night, making his mone.
> And if he herde song or instrument,
> Than wold he wepe, he mighte not be stent.
> So feble were his spirites, and so low,
> And changed so, that no man coude know
> His speche ne his vois, though men it herd.'

This picture of the sinking of the heart, of the wasting away of the body and mind, of the gradual failure of all the faculties under the contagion of a rankling sorrow, cannot be surpassed. Of the same kind is his farewel to his mistress, after he has gained her hand and lost his life in the combat:

> 'Alas the wo! alas the peines stronge,
> That I for you have suffered, and so longe!
> Alas the deth! alas min Emilie!
> Alas departing of our compagnie:
> Alas min hertes quene! alas my wif!
> Min hertes ladie, ender of my lif!
> What is this world? what axen men to have?
> Now with his love, now in his colde grave
> Alone withouten any compagnie.'

The death of Arcite is the more affecting, as it comes after triumph and victory, after the pomp of sacrifice, the solemnities of prayer, the celebration of the gorgeous rites of chivalry. The descriptions of the three temples of Mars, of Venus, and Diana, of the ornaments and ceremonies used in each, with the reception given to the offerings of the lovers, have a beauty and grandeur, much of which is lost in Dryden's version. For instance, such lines as the following are not rendered with their true feeling.

> 'Why shulde I not as well eke tell you all
> The purtreiture that was upon the wall
> Within the temple of mighty Mars the rede—
> That highte the gret temple of Mars in Trace
> In thilke colde and frosty region,
> Ther as Mars hath his sovereine mansion.
> First on the wall was peinted a forest,
> In which ther wonneth neyther man ne best,
> With knotty knarry barrein trees old
> Of stubbes sharpe and hideous to behold;
> In which ther ran a romble and a swough,
> As though a storme shuld bresten every bough.'

And again, among innumerable terrific images of death and slaughter painted on the wall, is this one:

> 'The statue of Mars upon a carte stood
> Armed, and looked grim as he were wood.
> A wolf ther stood beforne him at his fete
> With eyen red, and of a man he ete.'

The story of Griselda is in Boccaccio; but the Clerk of Oxenforde, who tells it, professes to have learned it from Petrarch. This story has gone all over Europe, and has passed into a proverb. In spite of the barbarity of the circumstances, which are abominable, the sentiment remains unimpaired and unalterable. It is of that kind, 'that heaves no sigh, that sheds no tear'; but it hangs upon the beatings of the heart; it is a part of the very being; it is as inseparable from it as the breath we draw. It is still and calm as the face of death. Nothing can touch it in its ethereal purity: tender as the yielding flower, it is fixed as the marble firmament. The only remonstrance she makes, the only complaint she utters against all the ill-treatment she receives, is that single line where, when turned back naked to her father's house, she says,

> 'Let me not like a worm go by the way.

The first outline given of the character is inimitable:

'Nought fer fro thilke paleis honourable,
Wher as this markis shope his mariage,
Ther stood a thorpe, of sighte delitable,
In which that poure folk of that village
Hadden hir bestes and her herbergage,
And of hir labour toke hir sustenance,
After that the earthe yave hem habundance.

Among this poure folk ther dwelt a man,
Which that was holden pourest of hem all:
But highe God sometime senden can
His grace unto a litel oxes stall:
Janicola men of that thorpe him call.
A doughter had he, faire ynough to sight,
And Grisildis this yonge maiden hight.

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
Than was she on the fairest under Sonne;
Ful pourely yfostred up was she:
No likerous lust was in hire herte yronne;
Ful ofter of the well than of the tonne
She dranke, and for she wolde vertue plese,
She knew wel labour, but non idel ese.

But though this mayden tendre were of age,
Yet in the brest of hire virginitee
Ther was enclosed sad and ripe corage:
And in gret reverence and charitee
Hire olde poure fader fostred she:
A few sheep spinning on the feld she kept,
She wolde not ben idel til she slept.

And whan she homward came she wolde bring
Wortes and other herbes times oft,
The which she shred and sethe for hire living,
And made hire bed ful hard, and nothing soft:
And ay she kept hire fadres lif on loft
With every obeisance and diligence,
That child may don to fadres reverence,

Upon Grisilde, this poure creature,
Ful often sithe this markis sette his sye,
As he on hunting rode paraventure:
And whan it fell that he might hire espie,
He not with wanton loking of folie
His eyen cast on hire, but in sad wise
Upon hire chere he wold him oft avise,

Commending in his herte hire womanhede,
And eke hire vertue, passing any wight
Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede.
For though the people have no gret insight
In vertue, he considered ful right
Hire bountee, and disposed that he wold
Wedde hire only, if ever he wedden shold.

Grisilde of this (God wot) ful innocent,
That for hire shapen was all this array,
To fetchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh home as sone as ever she may.
For wel she had herd say, that thilke day
The markis shulde wedde, and, if she might,
She wolde fayn han seen som of that sight.

She thought, "I wol with other maidens stond,
That ben my felawes, in our dore, and see
The markisesse, and therto wol I fond
To don at home, as sone as it may be,
The labour which longeth unto me,
And than I may at leiser hire behold,
If she this way unto the castel hold."

And she wolde over the threswold gon,
The markis came and gan hire for to call,
And she set doun her water-pot anon
Beside the threswold in an oxes stall,
And doun upon hire knees she gan to fall.
And with sad countenance kneleth still,
Till she had herd what was the lordes will.'

The story of the little child slain in Jewry, (which is told by the Prioress, and worthy to be told by her who was 'all conscience and tender heart,') is not less touching than that of Griselda. It is simple and heroic to the last degree. The poetry of Chaucer has a religious sanctity about it, connected with the manners and superstitions of the age. It has all the spirit of martyrdom.

It has also all the extravagance and the utmost licentiousness of comic humour, equally arising out of the manners of the time. In this too Chaucer resembled Boccaccio that he excelled in both styles, and could pass at will 'from grave to gay, from lively to severe'; but he never confounded the two styles together (except from that involuntary and unconscious mixture of the pathetic and humorous, which is almost always to be found in nature,) and was exclusively taken up with what he set about, whether it was jest or earnest. The Wife of Bath's Prologue (which Pope has very admirably modern-

ised) is, perhaps, unequalled as a comic story. The Cock and the Fox is also excellent for lively strokes of character and satire. January and May is not so good as some of the others. Chaucer's versification, considering the time at which he wrote, and that versification is a thing in a great degree mechanical, is not one of his least merits. It has considerable strength and harmony, and its apparent deficiency in the latter respect arises chiefly from the alterations which have since taken place in the pronunciation or mode of accenting the words of the language. The best general rule for reading him is to pronounce the final *e*, as in reading Italian.

It was observed in the last Lecture that painting describes what the object is in itself, poetry what it implies or suggests. Chaucer's poetry is not, in general, the best confirmation of the truth of this distinction, for his poetry is more picturesque and historical than almost any other. But there is one instance in point which I cannot help giving in this place. It is the story of the three thieves who go in search of Death to kill him, and who meeting with him, are entangled in their fate by his words, without knowing him. In the printed catalogue to Mr. West's (in some respects very admirable) picture of Death on the Pale Horse, it is observed, that 'In poetry the same effect is produced by a few abrupt and rapid gleams of description, touching, as it were with fire, the features and edges of a general mass of awful obscurity; but in painting, such indistinctness would be a defect, and imply that the artist wanted the power to pourtray the conceptions of his fancy. Mr. West was of opinion that to delineate a physical form, which in its moral impression would approximate to that of the visionary Death of Milton, it was necessary to endow it, if possible, with the appearance of super-human strength and energy. He has therefore exerted the utmost force and perspicuity of his pencil on the central figure.'—One might suppose from this, that the way to represent a shadow was to make it as substantial as possible. Oh, no! Painting has its prerogatives, (and high ones they are) but they lie in representing the visible, not the invisible. The moral attributes of Death are powers and effects of an infinitely wide and general description, which no individual or physical form can possibly represent, but by a courtesy of speech, or by a distant analogy. The moral impression of Death is essentially visionary; its reality is in the mind's eye. Words are here the only *things*; and things, physical forms, the mere mockeries of the understanding. The less definite, the less bodily the conception, the more vast, unformed, and unsubstantial, the nearer does it approach to some resemblance of that omnipresent, lasting, universal, irresistible principle, which every where, and at some time or other, exerts its power over

all things. Death is a mighty abstraction, like Night, or Space, or Time. He is an ugly customer, who will not be invited to supper, or to sit for his picture. He is with us and about us, but we do not see him. He stalks on before us, and we do not mind him: he follows us close behind, and we do not turn to look back at him. We do not see him making faces at us in our life-time, nor perceive him afterwards sitting in mock-majesty, a twin-skeleton, beside us, tickling our bare ribs, and staring into our hollow eye-balls! Chaucer knew this. He makes three riotous companions go in search of Death to kill him, they meet with an old man whom they reproach with his age, and ask why he does not die, to which he answers thus:

> 'Ne Deth, alas! ne will not han my lif.
> Thus walke I like a restless caitiff,
> And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
> I knocke with my staf, erlich and late,
> And say to hire, "Leve mother, let me in.
> Lo, how I vanish, flesh and blood and skin,
> Alas! when shall my bones ben at reste?
> Mother, with you wolde I changen my cheste,
> That in my chambre longe time hath be,
> Ye, for an heren cloute to wrap in me."
> But yet to me she will not don that grace,
> For which ful pale and welked is my face.'

They then ask the old man where they shall find out Death to kill him, and he sends them on an errand which ends in the death of all three. We hear no more of him, but it is Death that they have encountered!

The interval between Chaucer and Spenser is long and dreary. There is nothing to fill up the chasm but the names of Occleve, 'ancient Gower,' Lydgate, Wyatt, Surry, and Sackville. Spenser flourished in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and was sent with Sir John Davies into Ireland, of which he has left behind him some tender recollections in his description of the bog of Allan, and a record in an ably written paper, containing observations on the state of that country and the means of improving it, which remain in full force to the present day. Spenser died at an obscure inn in London, it is supposed in distressed circumstances. The treatment he received from Burleigh is well known. Spenser, as well as Chaucer, was engaged in active life; but the genius of his poetry was not active: it is inspired by the love of ease, and relaxation from all the cares and business of life. Of all the poets, he is the most poetical. Though much later than Chaucer, his obligations to preceding writers were

less. He has in some measure borrowed the plan of his poem (as a number of distinct narratives) from Ariosto; but he has engrafted upon it an exuberance of fancy, and an endless voluptuousness of sentiment, which are not to be found in the Italian writer. Farther, Spenser is even more of an inventor in the subject-matter. There is an originality, richness, and variety in his allegorical personages and fictions, which almost vies with the splendor of the ancient mythology. If Ariosto transports us into the regions of romance, Spenser's poetry is all fairy-land. In Ariosto, we walk upon the ground, in a company, gay, fantastic, and adventurous enough. In Spenser, we wander in another world, among ideal beings. The poet takes and lays us in the lap of a lovelier nature, by the sound of softer streams, among greener hills and fairer valleys. He paints nature, not as we find it, but as we expected to find it; and fulfils the delightful promise of our youth. He waves his wand of enchantment—and at once embodies airy beings, and throws a delicious veil over all actual objects. The two worlds of reality and of fiction are poised on the wings of his imagination. His ideas, indeed, seem more distinct than his perceptions. He is the painter of abstractions, and describes them with dazzling minuteness. In the Mask of Cupid he makes the God of Love 'clap on high his coloured winges *twain*': and it is said of Gluttony, in the Procession of the Passions,

> 'In green vine leaves he was right fitly clad.'

At times he becomes picturesque from his intense love of beauty; as where he compares Prince Arthur's crest to the appearance of the almond tree:

> 'Upon the top of all his lofty crest,
> A bunch of hairs discolour'd diversely
> With sprinkled pearl and gold full richly drest
> Did shake and seem'd to daunce for jollity;
> Like to an almond tree ymounted high
> On top of green Selenis all alone,
> With blossoms brave bedecked daintily;
> Her tender locks do tremble every one
> At every little breath that under heav'n is blown.'

The love of beauty, however, and not of truth, is the moving principle of his mind; and he is guided in his fantastic delineations by no rule but the impulse of an inexhaustible imagination. He luxuriates equally in scenes of Eastern magnificence; or the still solitude of a hermit's cell—in the extremes of sensuality or refinement.

In reading the Faery Queen, you see a little withered old man by a wood-side opening a wicket, a giant, and a dwarf lagging far behind,

a damsel in a boat upon an enchanted lake, wood-nymphs, and satyrs; and all of a sudden you are transported into a lofty palace, with tapers burning, amidst knights and ladies, with dance and revelry, and song, 'and mask, and antique pageantry.' What can be more solitary, more shut up in itself, than his description of the house of Sleep, to which Archimago sends for a dream:

> 'And more to lull him in his slumber soft
> A trickling stream from high rock tumbling down,
> And ever-drizzling rain upon the loft,
> Mix'd with a murmuring wind, much like the sound
> Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swound.
> No other noise, nor people's troublous cries.
> That still are wont t' annoy the walled town
> Might there be heard; but careless Quiet lies
> Wrapt in eternal silence, far from enemies.'

It is as if 'the honey-heavy dew of slumber' had settled on his pen in writing these lines. How different in the subject (and yet how like in beauty) is the following description of the Bower of Bliss:

> 'Eftsoones they heard a most melodious sound
> Of all that mote delight a dainty ear;
> Such as at once might not on living ground,
> Save in this Paradise, be heard elsewhere:
> Right hard it was for wight which did it hear,
> To tell what manner musicke that mote be;
> For all that pleasing is to living eare
> Was there consorted in one harmonee:
> Birds, voices, instruments, windes, waters, all agree.
>
> The joyous birdes shrouded in chearefull shade
> Their notes unto the voice attempred sweet:
> The angelical soft trembling voices made
> To th' instruments divine respondence meet.
> The silver sounding instruments did meet
> With the base murmur of the water's fall;
> The water's fall with difference discreet,
> Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;
> The gentle warbling wind low answered to all.'

The remainder of the passage has all that voluptuous pathos, and languid brilliancy of fancy, in which this writer excelled:

> 'The whiles some one did chaunt this lovely lay;
> Ah! see, whoso fayre thing dost thou fain to see,
> In springing flower the image of thy day!
> Ah! see the virgin rose, how sweetly she

Doth first peep forth with bashful modesty,
  That fairer seems the less ye see her may!
Lo! see soon after, how more bold and free
  Her bared bosom she doth broad display;
Lo! see soon after, how she fades and falls away!

So passeth in the passing of a day
  Of mortal life the leaf, the bud, the flower;
Ne more doth flourish after first decay,
  That erst was sought to deck both bed and bower
Of many a lady and many a paramour!
  Gather therefore the rose whilst yet is prime,
For soon comes age that will her pride deflower;
  Gather the rose of love whilst yet is time,
Whilst loving thou mayst loved be with equal crime.[1]

He ceased; and then gan all the quire of birds
  Their divers notes to attune unto his lay,
As in approvance of his pleasing wordes.
  The constant pair heard all that he did say,
Yet swerved not, but kept their forward way
  Through many covert groves and thickets close,
In which they creeping did at last display[2]
  That wanton lady with her lover loose,
Whose sleepy head she in her lap did soft dispose.

Upon a bed of roses she was laid
  As faint through heat, or dight to pleasant sin;
And was arrayed or rather disarrayed,
  All in a veil of silk and silver thin,
That hid no whit her alabaster skin,
  But rather shewed more white, if more might be:
More subtle web Arachne cannot spin;
  Nor the fine nets, which oft we woven see
Of scorched dew, do not in the air more lightly flee.

Her snowy breast was bare to greedy spoil
  Of hungry eyes which n' ote therewith be fill'd,
And yet through languor of her late sweet toil
  Few drops more clear than nectar forth distill'd,
That like pure Orient perles adown it trill'd;
  And her fair eyes sweet smiling in delight
Moisten'd their fiery beams, with which she thrill'd
  Frail hearts, yet quenched not; like starry light,
Which sparkling on the silent waves does seem more bright.'

---

[1] Taken from Tasso.
[2] This word is an instance of those unwarrantable freedoms which Spenser sometimes took with language.

The finest things in Spenser are, the character of Una, in the first book; the House of Pride; the Cave of Mammon, and the Cave of Despair; the account of Memory, of whom it is said, among other things,

> 'The wars he well remember'd of King Nine,
> Of old Assaracus and Inachus divine';

the description of Belphœbe; the story of Florimel and the Witch's son; the Gardens of Adonis, and the Bower of Bliss; the Mask of Cupid; and Colin Clout's vision, in the last book. But some people will say that all this may be very fine, but that they cannot understand it on account of the allegory. They are afraid of the allegory, as if they thought it would bite them: they look at it as a child looks at a painted dragon, and think it will strangle them in its shining folds. This is very idle. If they do not meddle with the allegory, the allegory will not meddle with them. Without minding it at all, the whole is as plain as a pike-staff. It might as well be pretended that, we cannot see Poussin's pictures for the allegory, as that the allegory prevents us from understanding Spenser. For instance, when Britomart, seated amidst the young warriors, lets fall her hair and discovers her sex, is it necessary to know the part she plays in the allegory, to understand the beauty of the following stanza?

> 'And eke that stranger knight amongst the rest
> Was for like need enforc'd to disarray.
> Tho when as vailed was her lofty crest,
> Her golden locks that were in trammels gay
> Upbounden, did themselves adown display,
> And raught unto her heels like sunny beams
> That in a cloud their light did long time stay;
> Their vapour faded, shew their golden gleams,
> And through the persant air shoot forth their azure streams.

Or is there any mystery in what is said of Belphœbe, that her hair was sprinkled with flowers and blossoms which had been entangled in it as she fled through the woods? Or is it necessary to have a more distinct idea of Proteus, than that which is given of him in his boat, with the frighted Florimel at his feet, while

> '—— the cold icicles from his rough beard
> Dropped adown upon her snowy breast!'

Or is it not a sufficient account of one of the sea-gods that pass by them, to say—

> 'That was Arion crowned:—
> So went he playing on the watery plain.'

Or to take the Procession of the Passions that draw the coach of Pride, in which the figures of Idleness, of Gluttony, of Lechery, of Avarice, of Envy, and of Wrath speak, one should think, plain enough for themselves; such as this of Gluttony:

'And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony,
  Deformed creature, on a filthy swine;
His belly was up blown with luxury;
  And eke with fatness swollen were his eyne;
And like a crane his neck was long and fine,
  With which he swallowed up excessive feast,
For want whereof poor people oft did pine.

In green vine leaves he was right fitly clad;
  For other clothes he could not wear for heat:
And on his head an ivy garland had,
  From under which fast trickled down the sweat:
Still as he rode, he somewhat still did eat.
  And in his hand did bear a bouzing can,
Of which he supt so oft, that on his seat
  His drunken corse he scarce upholden can;
In shape and size more like a monster than a man.'

Or this of Lechery:

'And next to him rode lustfull Lechery
  Upon a bearded goat, whose rugged hair
And whaly eyes (the sign of jealousy)
  Was like the person's self whom he did bear:
Who rough and black, and filthy did appear.
  Unseemly man to please fair lady's eye:
Yet he of ladies oft was loved dear,
  When fairer faces were bid standen by:
O! who does know the bent of woman's fantasy?

In a green gown he clothed was full fair,
  Which underneath did hide his filthiness;
And in his hand a burning heart he bare,
  Full of vain follies and new fangleness;
For he was false and fraught with fickleness;
  And learned had to love with secret looks;
And well could dance; and sing with ruefulness;
  And fortunes tell; and read in loving books;
And thousand other ways to bait his fleshly hooks.

Inconstant man that loved all he saw,
  And lusted after all that he did love;
Ne would his looser life be tied to law;
  But joyed weak women's hearts to tempt and prove,
If from their loyal loves he might them move.'

This is pretty plain-spoken. Mr. Southey says of Spenser:

-Yet not more sweet
Than pure was he, and not more pure than wise;
High priest of all the Muses' mysteries!'

On the contrary, no one was more apt to pry into mysteries which do not strictly belong to the Muses.

Of the same kind with the Procession of the Passions, as little obscure, and still more beautiful, is the Mask of Cupid, with his train of votaries:

'The first was Fancy, like a lovely boy
Of rare aspect, and beauty without peer;

His garment neither was of silk nor say,
But painted plumes in goodly order dight,
Like as the sun-burnt Indians do array
Their tawny bodies in their proudest plight:
As those same plumes so seem'd he vain and light,
That by his gait might easily appear;
For still he far'd as dancing in delight,
And in his hand a windy fan did bear
That in the idle air he mov'd still here and there.

And him beside march'd amorous Desire,
Who seem'd of riper years than the other swain,
Yet was that other swain this elder's sire,
And gave him being, common to them twain:
His garment was disguised very vain,
And his embroidered bonnet sat awry;
Twixt both his hands few sparks he close did strain,
Which still he blew, and kindled busily,
That soon they life conceiv'd and forth in flames did fly.

Next after him went Doubt, who was yclad
In a discolour'd coat of strange disguise,
That at his back a broad capuccio had,
And sleeves dependant *Albanese-wise*;
He lookt askew with his mistrustful eyes,
And nicely trod, as thorns lay in his way,
Or that the floor to shrink he did avise;
And on a broken reed he still did stay
His feeble steps, which shrunk when hard thereon he lay.

With him went Daunger, cloth'd in ragged weed,
Made of bear's skin, that him more dreadful made;
Yet his own face was dreadfull, ne did need
Strange horror to deform his grisly shade;

A net in th' one hand, and a rusty blade
In th' other was; this Mischiefe, that Mishap;
With th' one his foes he threat'ned to invade,
With th' other he his friends meant to enwrap;
For whom he could not kill he practiz'd to entrap.

Next him was Fear, all arm'd from top to toe,
Yet thought himselfe not safe enough thereby,
But fear'd each shadow moving to and fro;
And his own arms when glittering he did spy
Or clashing heard, he fast away did fly,
As ashes pale of hue, and winged-heel'd;
And evermore on Daunger fixt his eye,
'Gainst whom he always bent a brazen shield,
Which his right hand unarmed fearfully did wield.

With him went Hope in rank, a handsome maid,
Of chearfull look and lovely to behold;
In silken samite she was light array'd,
And her fair locks were woven up in gold;
She always smil'd, and in her hand did hold
An holy-water sprinkle dipt in dew,
With which she sprinkled favours manifold
On whom she list, and did great liking shew,
Great liking unto many, but true love to few.

Next after them, the winged God himself
Came riding on a lion ravenous,
Taught to obey the menage of that elfe
That man and beast with power imperious
Subdueth to his kingdom tyrannous:
His blindfold eyes he bade awhile unbind,
That his proud spoil of that same dolorous
Fair dame he might behold in perfect kind;
Which seen, he much rejoiced in his cruel mind.

Of which full proud, himself uprearing high,
He looked round about with stern disdain,
And did survey his goodly company:
And marshalling the evil-ordered train,
With that the darts which his right hand did strain,
Full dreadfully he shook, that all did quake,
And clapt on high his colour'd winges twain,
That all his many it afraid did make:
Tho, blinding him again, his way he forth did take.'

The description of Hope, in this series of historical portraits, is one of the most beautiful in Spenser: and the triumph of Cupid at the mischief he has made, is worthy of the malicious urchin deity. In

reading these descriptions, one can hardly avoid being reminded of Rubens's allegorical pictures; but the account of Satyrane taming the lion's whelps and lugging the bear's cubs along in his arms while yet an infant, whom his mother so naturally advises to 'go seek some other play-fellows,' has even more of this high picturesque character. Nobody but Rubens could have painted the fancy of Spenser; and he could not have given the sentiment, the airy dream that hovers over it!

With all this, Spenser neither makes us laugh nor weep. The only jest in his poem is an allegorical play upon words, where he describes Malbecco as escaping in the herd of goats, 'by the help of his fayre hornes on hight.' But he has been unjustly charged with a want of passion and of strength. He has both in an immense degree. He has not indeed the pathos of immediate action or suffering, which is more properly the dramatic; but he has all the pathos of sentiment and romance—all that belongs to distant objects of terror, and uncertain, imaginary distress. His strength, in like manner, is not strength of will or action, of bone and muscle, nor is it coarse and palpable—but it assumes a character of vastness and sublimity seen through the same visionary medium, and blended with the appalling associations of preternatural agency. We need only turn, in proof of this, to the Cave of Despair, or the Cave of Mammon, or to the account of the change of Malbecco into Jealousy. The following stanzas, in the description of the Cave of Mammon, the grisly house of Plutus, are unrivalled for the portentous massiness of the forms, the splendid chiaro-scuro, and shadowy horror.

'That house's form within was rude and strong,
Like an huge cave hewn out of rocky clift,
From whose rough vault the ragged breaches hung,
Embossed with massy gold of glorious gift,
And with rich metal loaded every rift,
That heavy ruin they did seem to threat;
And over them Arachne high did lift
Her cunning web, and spread her subtle net,
Enwrapped in foul smoke, and clouds more black than jet.

Both roof and floor, and walls were all of gold,
But overgrown with dust and old decay,[1]
And hid in darkness that none could behold

[1] 'That all with one consent praise new-born gauds,
Tho' they are made and moulded of things past,
And give to Dust, that is a little gilt,
More laud than gold o'er-dusted.'
Troilus and Cressida.

The hue thereof. for view of cheerful day
Did never in that house itself display,
But a faint shadow of uncertain light;
Such as a lamp whose life doth fade away;
Or as the moon clothed with cloudy night
Does shew to him that walks in fear and sad affright.

* * * * * * *

And over all sad Horror with grim hue
Did always soar, beating his iron wings;
And after him owls and night-ravens flew,
The hateful messengers of heavy things,
Of death and dolour telling sad tidings;
Whiles sad Celleno, sitting on a clift,
A song of bitter bale and sorrow sings,
That heart of flint asunder could have rift;
Which having ended, after him she flieth swift.'

The Cave of Despair is described with equal gloominess and power of fancy; and the fine moral declamation of the owner of it, on the evils of life, almost makes one in love with death. In the story of Malbecco, who is haunted by jealousy, and in vain strives to run away from his own thoughts—

'High over hill and over dale he flies'—

the truth of human passion and the preternatural ending are equally striking.—It is not fair to compare Spenser with Shakspeare, in point of interest. A fairer comparison would be with Comus; and the result would not be unfavourable to Spenser. There is only one work of the same allegorical kind, which has more interest than Spenser (with scarcely less imagination): and that is the Pilgrim's Progress. The three first books of the Faery Queen are very superior to the three last. One would think that Pope, who used to ask if any one had ever read the Faery Queen through, had only dipped into these last. The only things in them equal to the former, are the account of Talus, the Iron Man, and the delightful episode of Pastorella.

The language of Spenser is full, and copious, to overflowing: it is less pure and idiomatic than Chaucer's, and is enriched and adorned with phrases borrowed from the different languages of Europe, both ancient and modern. He was, probably, seduced into a certain license of expression by the difficulty of filling up the moulds of his complicated rhymed stanza from the limited resources of his native language. This stanza, with alternate and repeatedly recurring rhymes, is borrowed from the Italians. It was peculiarly fitted to

their language, which abounds in similar vowel terminations, and is as little adapted to ours, from the stubborn, unaccommodating resistance which the consonant endings of the northern languages make to this sort of endless sing-song.—Not that I would, on that account, part with the stanza of Spenser. We are, perhaps, indebted to this very necessity of finding out new forms of expression, and to the occasional faults to which it led, for a poetical language rich and varied and magnificent beyond all former, and almost all later example. His versification is, at once, the most smooth and the most sounding in the language. It is a labyrinth of sweet sounds, 'in many a winding bout of linked sweetness long drawn out'—that would cloy by their very sweetness, but that the ear is constantly relieved and enchanted by their continued variety of modulation—dwelling on the pauses of the action, or flowing on in a fuller tide of harmony with the movement of the sentiment. It has not the bold dramatic transitions of Shakspeare's blank verse, nor the high-raised tone of Milton's; but it is the perfection of melting harmony, dissolving the soul in pleasure, or holding it captive in the chains of suspense. Spenser was the poet of our waking dreams; and he has invented not only a language, but a music of his own for them. The undulations are infinite, like those of the waves of the sea: but the effect is still the same, lulling the senses into a deep oblivion of the jarring noises of the world, from which we have no wish to be ever recalled.

LECTURE III

ON SHAKSPEARE AND MILTON

In looking back to the great works of genius in former times, we are sometimes disposed to wonder at the little progress which has since been made in poetry, and in the arts of imitation in general. But this is perhaps a foolish wonder. Nothing can be more contrary to the fact, than the supposition that in what we understand by the *fine arts*, as painting, and poetry, relative perfection is only the result of repeated efforts in successive periods, and that what has been once well done, constantly leads to something better. What is mechanical, reducible to rule, or capable of demonstration, is progressive, and admits of gradual improvement: what is not mechanical, or definite, but depends on feeling, taste, and genius, very soon becomes stationary, or retrograde, and loses more than it gains by transfusion. The contrary opinion is a vulgar error, which has grown up, like many

others, from transferring an analogy of one kind to something quite distinct, without taking into the account the difference in the nature of the things, or attending to the difference of the results. For most persons, finding what wonderful advances have been made in biblical criticism, in chemistry, in mechanics, in geometry, astronomy, &c. *i.e.* in things depending on mere inquiry and experiment, or on absolute demonstration, have been led hastily to conclude, that there was a general tendency in the efforts of the human intellect to improve by repetition, and, in all other arts and institutions, to grow perfect and mature by time. We look back upon the theological creed of our ancestors, and their discoveries in natural philosophy, with a smile of pity: science, and the arts connected with it, have all had their infancy, their youth, and manhood, and seem to contain in them no principle of limitation or decay: and, inquiring no farther about the matter, we infer, in the intoxication of our pride, and the height of our self-congratulation, that the same progress has been made, and will continue to be made, in all other things which are the work of man. The fact, however, stares us so plainly in the face, that one would think the smallest reflection must suggest the truth, and overturn our sanguine theories. The greatest poets, the ablest orators, the best painters, and the finest sculptors that the world ever saw, appeared soon after the birth of these arts, and lived in a state of society which was, in other respects, comparatively barbarous. Those arts, which depend on individual genius and incommunicable power, have always leaped at once from infancy to manhood, from the first rude dawn of invention to their meridian height and dazzling lustre, and have in general declined ever after. This is the peculiar distinction and privilege of each, of science and of art:—of the one, never to attain its utmost limit of perfection; and of the other, to arrive at it almost at once. Homer, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Dante, and Ariosto, (Milton alone was of a later age, and not the worse for it)—Raphael, Titian, Michael Angelo, Correggio, Cervantes, and Boccaccio, the Greek sculptors and tragedians,—all lived near the beginning of their arts—perfected, and all but created them. These giant-sons of genius stand indeed upon the earth, but they tower above their fellows; and the long line of their successors, in different ages, does not interpose any object to obstruct their view, or lessen their brightness. In strength and stature they are unrivalled; in grace and beauty they have not been surpassed. In after-ages, and more refined periods, (as they are called) great men have arisen, one by one, as it were by throes and at intervals; though in general the best of these cultivated and artificial minds were of an inferior order; as Tasso and Pope, among poets; Guido and Vandyke, among painters. But

in the earlier stages of the arts, as soon as the first mechanical difficulties had been got over, and the language was sufficiently acquired, they rose by clusters, and in constellations, never so to rise again!

The arts of painting and poetry are conversant with the world of thought within us, and with the world of sense around us—with what we know, and see, and feel intimately. They flow from the sacred shrine of our own breasts, and are kindled at the living lamp of nature. But the pulse of the passions assuredly beat as high, the depths and soundings of the human heart were as well understood three thousand, or three hundred years ago, as they are at present: the face of nature, and 'the human face divine' shone as bright then as they have ever done. But it is *their* light, reflected by true genius on art, that marks out its path before it, and sheds a glory round the Muses' feet, like that which

> 'Circled Una's angel face,
> And made a sunshine in the shady place.'

The four greatest names in English poetry, are almost the four first we come to—Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton. There are no others that can really be put in competition with these. The two last have had justice done them by the voice of common fame. Their names are blazoned in the very firmament of reputation; while the two first (though 'the fault has been more in their stars than in themselves that they are underlings') either never emerged far above the horizon, or were too soon involved in the obscurity of time. The three first of these are excluded from Dr. Johnson's Lives of the Poets (Shakspeare indeed is so from the dramatic form of his compositions): and the fourth, Milton, is admitted with a reluctant and churlish welcome.

In comparing these four writers together, it might be said that Chaucer excels as the poet of manners, or of real life; Spenser, as the poet of romance; Shakspeare as the poet of nature (in the largest use of the term); and Milton, as the poet of morality. Chaucer most frequently describes things as they are; Spenser, as we wish them to be; Shakspeare, as they would be; and Milton as they ought to be. As poets, and as great poets, imagination, that is, the power of feigning things according to nature, was common to them all: but the principle or moving power, to which this faculty was most subservient in Chaucer, was habit, or inveterate prejudice; in Spenser, novelty, and the love of the marvellous; in Shakspeare, it was the force of passion, combined with every variety of possible circumstances; and in Milton, only with the highest. The characteristic of Chaucer is intensity; of Spenser, remoteness; of Milton,

elevation; of Shakspeare, every thing.—It has been said by some critic, that Shakspeare was distinguished from the other dramatic writers of his day only by his wit; that they had all his other qualities but that; that one writer had as much sense, another as much fancy, another as much knowledge of character, another the same depth of passion, and another as great a power of language. This statement is not true; nor is the inference from it well-founded, even if it were. This person does not seem to have been aware that, upon his own shewing, the great distinction of Shakspeare's genius was its virtually including the genius of all the great men of his age, and not his differing from them in one accidental particular. But to have done with such minute and literal trifling.

The striking peculiarity of Shakspeare's mind was its generic quality, its power of communication with all other minds—so that it contained a universe of thought and feeling within itself, and had no one peculiar bias, or exclusive excellence more than another. He was just like any other man, but that he was like all other men. He was the least of an egotist that it was possible to be. He was nothing in himself; but he was all that others were, or that they could become. He not only had in himself the germs of every faculty and feeling, but he could follow them by anticipation, intuitively, into all their conceivable ramifications, through every change of fortune or conflict of passion, or turn of thought. He had 'a mind reflecting ages past,' and present:—all the people that ever lived are there. There was no respect of persons with him. His genius shone equally on the evil and on the good, on the wise and the foolish, the monarch and the beggar: 'All corners of the earth, kings, queens, and states, maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave,' are hardly hid from his searching glance. He was like the genius of humanity, changing places with all of us at pleasure, and playing with our purposes as with his own. He turned the globe round for his amusement, and surveyed the generations of men, and the individuals as they passed, with their different concerns, passions, follies, vices, virtues, actions, and motives—as well those that they knew, as those which they did not know, or acknowledge to themselves. The dreams of childhood, the ravings of despair, were the toys of his fancy. Airy beings waited at his call, and came at his bidding. Harmless fairies 'nodded to him, and did him curtesies': and the night-hag bestrode the blast at the command of 'his so potent art.' The world of spirits lay open to him, like the world of real men and women: and there is the same truth in his delineations of the one as of the other; for if the preternatural characters he describes could be supposed to exist, they would speak, and feel, and act, as he makes

them. He had only to think of any thing in order to become that thing, with all the circumstances belonging to it. When he conceived of a character, whether real or imaginary, he not only entered into all its thoughts and feelings, but seemed instantly, and as if by touching a secret spring, to be surrounded with all the same objects, 'subject to the same skyey influences,' the same local, outward, and unforeseen accidents which would occur in reality. Thus the character of Caliban not only stands before us with a language and manners of its own, but the scenery and situation of the enchanted island he inhabits, the traditions of the place, its strange noises, its hidden recesses, 'his frequent haunts and ancient neighbourhood,' are given with a miraculous truth of nature, and with all the familiarity of an old recollection. The whole 'coheres semblably together' in time, place, and circumstance. In reading this author, you do not merely learn what his characters say,—you see their persons. By something expressed or understood, you are at no loss to decypher their peculiar physiognomy, the meaning of a look, the grouping, the bye-play, as we might see it on the stage. A word, an epithet paints a whole scene, or throws us back whole years in the history of the person represented. So (as it has been ingeniously remarked) when Prospero describes himself as left alone in the boat with his daughter, the epithet which he applies to her, 'Me and thy *crying* self,' flings the imagination instantly back from the grown woman to the helpless condition of infancy, and places the first and most trying scene of his misfortunes before us, with all that he must have suffered in the interval. How well the silent anguish of Macduff is conveyed to the reader, by the friendly expostulation of Malcolm—'What! man, ne'er pull your hat upon your brows!' Again, Hamlet, in the scene with Rosencrans and Guildenstern, somewhat abruptly concludes his fine soliloquy on life by saying, 'Man delights not me, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.' Which is explained by their answer—'My lord, we had no such stuff in our thoughts. But we smiled to think, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you, whom we met on the way':—as if while Hamlet was making this speech, his two old schoolfellows from Wittenberg had been really standing by, and he had seen them smiling by stealth, at the idea of the players crossing their minds. It is not 'a combination and a form' of words, a set speech or two, a preconcerted theory of a character, that will do this: but all the persons concerned must have been present in the poet's imagination, as at a kind of rehearsal; and whatever would have passed through their minds on the occasion, and have been observed by others, passed through his, and is made known to the

reader.—I may add in passing, that Shakspeare always gives the best directions for the costume and carriage of his heroes. Thus to take one example, Ophelia gives the following account of Hamlet; and as Ophelia had seen Hamlet, I should think her word ought to be taken against that of any modern authority.

> '*Ophelia.* My lord, as I was reading in my closet,
> Prince Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd,
> No hat upon his head, his stockings loose,
> Ungartred, and down-gyved to his ancle,
> Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
> And with a look so piteous,
> As if he had been sent from hell
> To speak of horrors, thus he comes before me.
> *Polonius.* Mad for thy love!
> *Oph.* My lord, I do not know,
> But truly I do fear it.
> *Pol.* What said he?
> *Oph.* He took me by the wrist, and held me hard
> Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
> And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
> He falls to such perusal of my face,
> As he would draw it: long staid he so;
> At last, a little shaking of my arm,
> And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
> He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound,
> As it did seem to shatter all his bulk,
> And end his being. That done, he lets me go,
> And with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
> He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
> For out of doors he went without their help,
> And to the last bended their light on me.'
>
> *Act. II. Scene* 1.

How after this airy, fantastic idea of irregular grace and bewildered melancholy any one can play Hamlet, as we have seen it played, with strut, and stare, and antic right-angled sharp-pointed gestures, it is difficult to say, unless it be that Hamlet is not bound, by the prompter's cue, to study the part of Ophelia. The account of Ophelia's death begins thus:

> 'There is a willow hanging o'er a brook,
> That shows its hoary leaves in the glassy stream.'—

Now this is an instance of the same unconscious power of mind which is as true to nature as itself. The leaves of the willow are, in fact, white underneath, and it is this part of them which would appear

'hoary' in the reflection in the brook. The same sort of intuitive power, the same faculty of bringing every object in nature, whether present or absent, before the mind's eye, is observable in the speech of Cleopatra, when conjecturing what were the employments of Antony in his absence:—'He's speaking now, or murmuring, where's my serpent of old Nile?' How fine to make Cleopatra have this consciousness of her own character, and to make her feel that it is this for which Antony is in love with her! She says, after the battle of Actium, when Antony has resolved to risk another fight, 'It is my birth-day; I had thought to have held it poor: but since my lord is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra.' What other poet would have thought of such a casual resource of the imagination, or would have dared to avail himself of it? The thing happens in the play as it might have happened in fact.—That which, perhaps, more than any thing else distinguishes the dramatic productions of Shakspeare from all others, is this wonderful truth and individuality of conception. Each of his characters is as much itself, and as absolutely independent of the rest, as well as of the author, as if they were living persons, not fictions of the mind. The poet may be said, for the time, to identify himself with the character he wishes to represent, and to pass from one to another, like the same soul successively animating different bodies. By an art like that of the ventriloquist, he throws his imagination out of himself, and makes every word appear to proceed from the mouth of the person in whose name it is given. His plays alone are properly expressions of the passions, not descriptions of them. His characters are real beings of flesh and blood; they speak like men, not like authors. One might suppose that he had stood by at the time, and overheard what passed. As in our dreams we hold conversations with ourselves, make remarks, or communicate intelligence, and have no idea of the answer which we shall receive, and which we ourselves make, till we hear it: so the dialogues in Shakspeare are carried on without any consciousness of what is to follow, without any appearance of preparation or premeditation. The gusts of passion come and go like sounds of music borne on the wind. Nothing is made out by formal inference and analogy, by climax and antithesis: all comes, or seems to come, immediately from nature. Each object and circumstance exists in his mind, as it would have existed in reality: each several train of thought and feeling goes on of itself, without confusion or effort. In the world of his imagination, every thing has a life, a place, and being of its own!

Chaucer's characters are sufficiently distinct from one another, but they are too little varied in themselves, too much like identical propositions. They are consistent, but uniform; we get no new idea of

them from first to last; they are not placed in different lights, nor are their subordinate *traits* brought out in new situations; they are like portraits or physiognomical studies, with the distinguishing features marked with inconceivable truth and precision, but that preserve the same unaltered air and attitude. Shakspeare's are historical figures, equally true and correct, but put into action, where every nerve and muscle is displayed in the struggle with others, with all the effect of collision and contrast, with every variety of light and shade. Chaucer's characters are narrative, Shakspeare's dramatic, Milton's epic. That is, Chaucer told only as much of his story as he pleased, as was required for a particular purpose. He answered for his characters himself. In Shakspeare they are introduced upon the stage, are liable to be asked all sorts of questions, and are forced to answer for themselves. In Chaucer we perceive a fixed essence of character. In Shakspeare there is a continual composition and decomposition of its elements, a fermentation of every particle in the whole mass, by its alternate affinity or antipathy to other principles which are brought in contact with it. Till the experiment is tried, we do not know the result, the turn which the character will take in its new circumstances. Milton took only a few simple principles of character, and raised them to the utmost conceivable grandeur, and refined them from every base alloy. His imagination, 'nigh sphered in Heaven,' claimed kindred only with what he saw from that height, and could raise to the same elevation with itself. He sat retired and kept his state alone, 'playing with wisdom'; while Shakspeare mingled with the crowd, and played the host, 'to make society the sweeter welcome.'

The passion in Shakspeare is of the same nature as his delineation of character. It is not some one habitual feeling or sentiment preying upon itself, growing out of itself, and moulding every thing to itself; it is passion modified by passion, by all the other feelings to which the individual is liable, and to which others are liable with him; subject to all the fluctuations of caprice and accident; calling into play all the resources of the understanding and all the energies of the will; irritated by obstacles or yielding to them; rising from small beginnings to its utmost height; now drunk with hope, now stung to madness, now sunk in despair, now blown to air with a breath, now raging like a torrent. The human soul is made the sport of fortune, the prey of adversity: it is stretched on the wheel of destiny, in restless ecstacy. The passions are in a state of projection. Years are melted down to moments, and every instant teems with fate. We know the results, we see the process. Thus after Iago has been boasting to himself of the effect of his poisonous

suggestions on the mind of Othello, 'which, with a little act upon the blood, will work like mines of sulphur,' he adds—

> 'Look where he comes! not poppy, nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the East,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou ow'dst yesterday.'—

And he enters at this moment, like the crested serpent, crowned with his wrongs and raging for revenge! The whole depends upon the turn of a thought. A word, a look, blows the spark of jealousy into a flame; and the explosion is immediate and terrible as a volcano. The dialogues in Lear, in Macbeth, that between Brutus and Cassius, and nearly all those in Shakspeare, where the interest is wrought up to its highest pitch, afford examples of this dramatic fluctuation of passion. The interest in Chaucer is quite different; it is like the course of a river, strong, and full, and increasing. In Shakspeare, on the contrary, it is like the sea, agitated this way and that, and loud-lashed by furious storms; while in the still pauses of the blast, we distinguish only the cries of despair, or the silence of death! Milton, on the other hand, takes the imaginative part of passion—that which remains after the event, which the mind reposes on when all is over, which looks upon circumstances from the remotest elevation of thought and fancy, and abstracts them from the world of action to that of contemplation. The objects of dramatic poetry affect us by sympathy, by their nearness to ourselves, as they take us by surprise, or force us upon action, 'while rage with rage doth sympathise'; the objects of epic poetry affect us through the medium of the imagination, by magnitude and distance, by their permanence and universality. The one fill us with terror and pity, the other with admiration and delight. There are certain objects that strike the imagination, and inspire awe in the very idea of them, independently of any dramatic interest, that is, of any connection with the vicissitudes of human life. For instance, we cannot think of the pyramids of Egypt, of a Gothic ruin, or an old Roman encampment, without a certain emotion, a sense of power and sublimity coming over the mind. The heavenly bodies that hung over our heads wherever we go, and 'in their untroubled element shall shine when we are laid in dust, and all our cares forgotten,' affect us in the same way. Thus Satan's address to the Sun has an epic, not a dramatic interest; for though the second person in the dialogue makes no answer and feels no concern, yet the eye of that vast luminary is upon him, like the eye of heaven, and seems conscious of what he says, like an universal presence. Dramatic poetry and epic, in their perfection, indeed, approximate to and

strengthen one another. Dramatic poetry borrows aid from the dignity of persons and things, as the heroic does from human passion, but in theory they are distinct.—When Richard II. calls for the looking-glass to contemplate his faded majesty in it, and bursts into that affecting exclamation: 'Oh, that I were a mockery-king of snow, to melt away before the sun of Bolingbroke,' we have here the utmost force of human passion, combined with the ideas of regal splendour and fallen power. When Milton says of Satan:

> '—— His form had not yet lost
> All her original brightness, nor appear'd
> Less than archangel ruin'd, and th' excess
> Of glory obscur'd;'—

the mixture of beauty, of grandeur, and pathos, from the sense of irreparable loss, of never-ending, unavailing regret, is perfect.

The great fault of a modern school of poetry is, that it is an experiment to reduce poetry to a mere effusion of natural sensibility; or what is worse, to divest it both of imaginary splendour and human passion, to surround the meanest objects with the morbid feelings and devouring egotism of the writers' own minds. Milton and Shakspeare did not so understand poetry. They gave a more liberal interpretation both to nature and art. They did not do all they could to get rid of the one and the other, to fill up the dreary void with the Moods of their own Minds. They owe their power over the human mind to their having had a deeper sense than others of what was grand in the objects of nature, or affecting in the events of human life. But to the men I speak of there is nothing interesting, nothing heroical, but themselves. To them the fall of gods or of great men is the same. They do not enter into the feeling. They cannot understand the terms. They are even debarred from the last poor, paltry consolation of an unmanly triumph over fallen greatness; for their minds reject, with a convulsive effort and intolerable loathing, the very idea that there ever was, or was thought to be, any thing superior to themselves. All that has ever excited the attention or admiration of the world, they look upon with the most perfect indifference; and they are surprised to find that the world repays their indifference with scorn. 'With what measure they mete, it has been meted to them again.'—

Shakespeare's imagination is of the same plastic kind as his conception of character or passion. 'It glances from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven.' Its movement is rapid and devious. It unites the most opposite extremes; or, as Puck says, in boasting of his own feats, 'puts a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes.'

He seems always hurrying from his subject, even while describing it; but the stroke, like the lightning's, is sure as it is sudden. He takes the widest possible range, but from that very range he has his choice of the greatest variety and aptitude of materials. He brings together images the most alike, but placed at the greatest distance from each other; that is, found in circumstances of the greatest dissimilitude. From the remoteness of his combinations, and the celerity with which they are effected, they coalesce the more indissolubly together. The more the thoughts are strangers to each other, and the longer they have been kept asunder, the more intimate does their union seem to become. Their felicity is equal to their force. Their likeness is made more dazzling by their novelty. They startle, and take the fancy prisoner in the same instant. I will mention one or two which are very striking, and not much known, out of Troilus and Cressida. Æneas says to Agamemnon,

> 'I ask that I may waken reverence,
> And on the cheek be ready with a blush
> Modest as morning, when she coldly eyes
> The youthful Phœbus.'

Ulysses urging Achilles to shew himself in the field, says—

> 'No man is the lord of anything,
> Till he communicate his parts to others:
> Nor doth he of himself know them for aught,
> Till he behold them formed in the applause,
> Where they're extended! which like an arch reverberates
> The voice again, or like a gate of steel,
> Fronting the sun, receives and renders back
> Its figure and its heat.'

Patroclus gives the indolent warrior the same advice.

> 'Rouse yourself; and the weak wanton Cupid
> Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,
> And like a dew-drop from the lion's mane
> Be shook to air.'

Shakspeare's language and versification are like the rest of him. He has a magic power over words: they come winged at his bidding; and seem to know their places. They are struck out at a heat, on the spur of the occasion, and have all the truth and vividness which arise from an actual impression of the objects. His epithets and single phrases are like sparkles, thrown off from an imagination, fired by the whirling rapidity of its own motion. His language is

hieroglyphical. It translates thoughts into visible images. It abounds in sudden transitions and elliptical expressions. This is the source of his mixed metaphors, which are only abbreviated forms of speech. These, however, give no pain from long custom. They have, in fact, become idioms in the language. They are the building, and not the scaffolding to thought. We take the meaning and effect of a well-known passage entire, and no more stop to scan and spell out the particular words and phrases, than the syllables of which they are composed. In trying to recollect any other author, one sometimes stumbles, in case of failure, on a word as good. In Shakspeare, any other word but the true one, is sure to be wrong. If any body, for instance, could not recollect the words of the following description,

> '—— Light thickens,
> And the crow makes wing to the rooky wood,'

he would be greatly at a loss to substitute others for them equally expressive of the feeling. These remarks, however, are strictly applicable only to the impassioned parts of Shakspeare's language, which flowed from the warmth and originality of his imagination, and were his own. The language used for prose conversation and ordinary business is sometimes technical, and involved in the affectation of the time. Compare, for example, Othello's apology to the senate, relating 'his whole course of love,' with some of the preceding parts relating to his appointment, and the official dispatches from Cyprus. In this respect, 'the business of the state does him offence.' His versification is no less powerful, sweet, and varied. It has every occasional excellence, of sullen intricacy, crabbed and perplexed, or of the smoothest and loftiest expansion—from the ease and familiarity of measured conversation to the lyrical sounds

> '——Of ditties highly penned,
> Sung by a fair queen in a summer's bower,
> With ravishing division to her lute.'

It is the only blank verse in the language, except Milton's, that for itself is readable. It is not stately and uniformly swelling like his, but varied and broken by the inequalities of the ground it has to pass over in its uncertain course,

> 'And so by many winding nooks it strays,
> With willing sport to the wild ocean.'

It remains to speak of the faults of Shakspeare. They are not so many or so great as they have been represented; what there are, are chiefly owing to the following causes:—The universality of his genius

was, perhaps, a disadvantage to his single works; the variety of his resources, sometimes diverting him from applying them to the most effectual purposes. He might be said to combine the powers of Æschylus and Aristophanes, of Dante and Rabelais, in his own mind. If he had been only half what he was, he would perhaps have appeared greater. The natural ease and indifference of his temper made him sometimes less scrupulous than he might have been. He is relaxed and careless in critical places; he is in earnest throughout only in Timon, Macbeth, and Lear. Again, he had no models of acknowledged excellence constantly in view to stimulate his efforts, and by all that appears, no love of fame. He wrote for the 'great vulgar and the small,' in his time, not for posterity. If Queen Elizabeth and the maids of honour laughed heartily at his worst jokes, and the catcalls in the gallery were silent at his best passages, he went home satisfied, and slept the next night well. He did not trouble himself about Voltaire's criticisms. He was willing to take advantage of the ignorance of the age in many things; and if his plays pleased others, not to quarrel with them himself. His very facility of production would make him set less value on his own excellences, and not care to distinguish nicely between what he did well or ill. His blunders in chronology and geography do not amount to above half a dozen, and they are offences against chronology and geography, not against poetry. As to the unities, he was right in setting them at defiance. He was fonder of puns than became so great a man. His barbarisms were those of his age. His genius was his own. He had no objection to float down with the stream of common taste and opinion: he rose above it by his own buoyancy, and an impulse which he could not keep under, in spite of himself or others, and 'his delights did shew most dolphin-like.'

He had an equal genius for comedy and tragedy; and his tragedies are better than his comedies, because tragedy is better than comedy His female characters, which have been found fault with as insipid, are the finest in the world. Lastly, Shakspeare was the least of a coxcomb of any one that ever lived, and much of a gentleman.

Shakspeare discovers in his writings little religious enthusiasm, and an indifference to personal reputation; he had none of the bigotry of his age, and his political prejudices were not very strong. In these respects, as well as in every other, he formed a direct contrast to Milton. Milton's works are a perpetual invocation to the Muses; a hymn to Fame. He had his thoughts constantly fixed on the contemplation of the Hebrew theocracy, and of a perfect commonwealth; and he seized the pen with a hand just warm from the touch of the ark of faith. His religious zeal infused its character into his im-

agination; so that he devotes himself with the same sense of duty to the cultivation of his genius, as he did to the exercise of virtue, or the good of his country. The spirit of the poet, the patriot, and the prophet, vied with each other in his breast. His mind appears to have held equal communion with the inspired writers, and with the bards and sages of ancient Greece and Rome;—

'Blind Thamyris, and blind Mæonides,
And Tiresias, and Phineus, prophets old.'

He had a high standard, with which he was always comparing himself, nothing short of which could satisfy his jealous ambition. He thought of nobler forms and nobler things than those he found about him. He lived apart, in the solitude of his own thoughts, carefully excluding from his mind whatever might distract its purposes or alloy its purity, or damp its zeal. 'With darkness and with dangers compassed round,' he had the mighty models of antiquity always present to his thoughts, and determined to raise a monument of equal height and glory, 'piling up every stone of lustre from the brook,' for the delight and wonder of posterity. He had girded himself up, and as it were, sanctified his genius to this service from his youth. 'For after,' he says, 'I had from my first years, by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father, been exercised to the tongues, and some sciences as my age could suffer, by sundry masters and teachers, it was found that whether aught was imposed upon me by them, or betaken to of my own choice, the style by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live; but much latelier, in the private academies of Italy, perceiving that some trifles which I had in memory, composed at under twenty or thereabout, met with acceptance above what was looked for; I began thus far to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intense study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to after-times as they should not willingly let it die. The accomplishment of these intentions, which have lived within me ever since I could conceive myself anything worth to my country, lies not but in a power above man's to promise; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost aver of myself, as far as life and free leisure will extend. Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet, I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth or the vapours

of wine; like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite, nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases: to this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, and insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs. Although it nothing content me to have disclosed thus much beforehand; but that I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes, from beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies.'

So that of Spenser:

> 'The noble heart that harbours virtuous thought,
> And is with child of glorious great intent,
> Can never rest until it forth have brought
> The eternal brood of glory excellent.'

Milton, therefore, did not write from casual impulse, but after a severe examination of his own strength, and with a resolution to leave nothing undone which it was in his power to do. He always labours, and almost always succeeds. He strives hard to say the finest things in the world, and he does say them. He adorns and dignifies his subject to the utmost: he surrounds it with every possible association of beauty or grandeur, whether moral, intellectual, or physical. He refines on his descriptions of beauty; loading sweets on sweets, till the sense aches at them; and raises his images of terror to a gigantic elevation, that 'makes Ossa like a wart.' In Milton, there is always an appearance of effort: in Shakespeare, scarcely any.

Milton has borrowed more than any other writer, and exhausted every source of imitation, sacred or profane; yet he is perfectly distinct from every other writer. He is a writer of centos, and yet in originality scarcely inferior to Homer. The power of his mind is stamped on every line. The fervour of his imagination melts down and renders malleable, as in a furnace, the most contradictory materials. In reading his works, we feel ourselves under the influence of a mighty intellect, that the nearer it approaches to others, becomes more distinct from them. The quantity of art in him shews the strength of his genius: the weight of his intellectual obligations would have oppressed any other writer. Milton's learning has the

effect of intuition. He describes objects, of which he could only have read in books, with the vividness of actual observation. His imagination has the force of nature. He makes words tell as pictures.

> 'Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat
> Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
> Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.'

The word *lucid* here gives to the idea all the sparkling effect of the most perfect landscape.

And again:

> 'As when a vulture on Imaus bred,
> Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,
> Dislodging from a region scarce of prey,
> To gorge the flesh of lambs and yeanling kids
> On hills where flocks are fed, flies towards the springs
> Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams;
> But in his way lights on the barren plains
> Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
> With sails and wind their cany waggons light.'

If Milton had taken a journey for the express purpose, he could not have described this scenery and mode of life better. Such passages are like demonstrations of natural history. Instances might be multiplied without end.

We might be tempted to suppose that the vividness with which he describes visible objects, was owing to their having acquired an unusual degree of strength in his mind, after the privation of his sight; but we find the same palpableness and truth in the descriptions which occur in his early poems. In Lycidas he speaks of 'the great vision of the guarded mount,' with that preternatural weight of impression with which it would present itself suddenly to 'the pilot of some small night-foundered skiff': and the lines in the Penseroso, describing 'the wandering moon,'

> 'Riding near her highest noon,
> Like one that had been led astray
> Through the heaven's wide pathless way,'

are as if he had gazed himself blind in looking at her. There is also the same depth of impression in his descriptions of the objects of all the different senses, whether colours, or sounds, or smells—the same absorption of his mind in whatever engaged his attention at the time. It has been indeed objected to Milton, by a common perversity of criticism, that his ideas were musical rather than picturesque, as if because they were in the highest degree musical, they must be (to

keep the sage critical balance even, and to allow no one man to possess two qualities at the same time) proportionably deficient in other respects. But Milton's poetry is not cast in any such narrow, common-place mould; it is not so barren of resources. His worship of the Muse was not so simple or confined. A sound arises 'like a steam of rich distilled perfumes'; we hear the pealing organ, but the incense on the altars is also there, and the statues of the gods are ranged around! The ear indeed predominates over the eye, because it is more immediately affected, and because the language of music blends more immediately with, and forms a more natural accompaniment to, the variable and indefinite associations of ideas conveyed by words. But where the associations of the imagination are not the principal thing, the individual object is given by Milton with equal force and beauty. The strongest and best proof of this, as a characteristic power of his mind, is, that the persons of Adam and Eve, of Satan, &c. are always accompanied, in our imagination, with the grandeur of the naked figure; they convey to us the ideas of sculpture. As an instance, take the following·

'——— He soon
Saw within ken a glorious Angel stand,
The same whom John saw also in the sun:
His back was turned, but not his brightness hid;
Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar
Circled his head, nor less his locks behind
Illustrious on his shoulders fledge with wings
Lay waving round; on some great charge employ'd
He seem'd, or fix'd in cogitation deep.
Glad was the spirit impure, as now in hope
To find who might direct his wand'ring flight
To Paradise, the happy seat of man,
His journey's end, and our beginning woe.
But first he casts to change his proper shape,
Which else might work him danger or delay
And now a stripling cherub he appears,
Not of the prime, yet such as in his face
Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb
Suitable grace diffus'd, so well he feign'd:
Under a coronet his flowing hair
In curls on either cheek play'd; wings he wore
Of many a colour'd plume sprinkled with gold,
His habit fit for speed succinct, and held
Before his decent steps a silver wand.'

The figures introduced here have all the elegance and precision of a Greek statue; glossy and impurpled, tinged with golden light, and musical as the strings of Memnon's harp!

Again, nothing can be more magnificent than the portrait of Beelzebub:

> 'With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear
> The weight of mightiest monarchies:'

Or the comparison of Satan, as he 'lay floating many a rood,' to 'that sea beast,'

> 'Leviathan, which God of all his works
> Created hugest that swim the ocean-stream!'

What a force of imagination is there in this last expression! What an idea it conveys of the size of that hugest of created beings, as if it shrunk up the ocean to a stream, and took up the sea in its nostrils as a very little thing? Force of style is one of Milton's greatest excellences. Hence, perhaps, he stimulates us more in the reading, and less afterwards. The way to defend Milton against all impugners, is to take down the book and read it.

Milton's blank verse is the only blank verse in the language (except Shakspeare's) that deserves the name of verse. Dr. Johnson, who had modelled his ideas of versification on the regular sing-song of Pope, condemns the Paradise Lost as harsh and unequal. I shall not pretend to say that this is not sometimes the case; for where a degree of excellence beyond the mechanical rules of art is attempted, the poet must sometimes fail. But I imagine that there are more perfect examples in Milton of musical expression, or of an adaptation of the sound and movement of the verse to the meaning of the passage, than in all our other writers, whether of rhyme or blank verse, put together, (with the exception already mentioned). Spenser is the most harmonious of our stanza writers, as Dryden is the most sounding and varied of our rhymists. But in neither is there any thing like the same ear for music, the same power of approximating the varieties of poetical to those of musical rhythm, as there is in our great epic poet. The sound of his lines is moulded into the expression of the sentiment, almost of the very image. They rise or fall, pause or hurry rapidly on, with exquisite art, but without the least trick or affectation, as the occasion seems to require.

The following are some of the finest instances:

> '——— His hand was known
> In Heaven by many a tower'd structure high;—
> Nor was his name unheard or unador'd
> In ancient Greece: and in the Ausonian land
> Men called him Mulciber: and how he fell
> From Heaven, they fabled, thrown by angry Jove

Sheer o'er the chrystal battlements; from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith like a falling star
On Lemnos, the Ægean isle: thus they relate,
Erring.'—

'———— But chief the spacious hall
Thick swarm'd, both on the ground and in the air,
Brush'd with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
In spring time, when the sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters; they among fresh dews and flow'rs
Fly to and fro: or on the smoothed plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubb'd with balm, expatiate and confer
Their state affairs. So thick the airy crowd
Swarm'd and were straiten'd; till the signal giv'n,
Behold a wonder! They but now who seem'd
In bigness to surpass earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless, like that Pygmean race
Beyond the Indian mount, or fairy elves,
Whose midnight revels by a forest side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while over-head the moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
Wheels her pale course: they on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.'

I can only give another instance, though I have some difficulty in leaving off.

'Round he surveys (and well might, where he stood
So high above the circling canopy
Of night's extended shade) from th' eastern point
Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas
Beyond the horizon: then from pole to pole
He views in breadth, and without longer pause
Down right into the world's first region throws
His flight precipitant, and winds with ease
Through the pure marble air his oblique way
Amongst innumerable stars that shone
Stars distant, but nigh hand seem'd other worlds;
Or other worlds they seem'd or happy isles,' &c.

The verse, in this exquisitely modulated passage, floats up and down

as if it had itself wings. Milton has himself given us the theory of his versification—

> 'Such as the meeting soul may pierce
> In notes with many a winding bout
> Of linked sweetness long drawn out.'

Dr. Johnson and Pope would have converted his vaulting Pegasus into a rocking-horse. Read any other blank verse but Milton's,—Thomson's, Young's, Cowper's, Wordsworth's,—and it will be found, from the want of the same insight into 'the hidden soul of harmony,' to be mere lumbering prose.

To proceed to a consideration of the merits of Paradise Lost, in the most essential point of view, I mean as to the poetry of character and passion. I shall say nothing of the fable, or of other technical objections or excellences; but I shall try to explain at once the foundation of the interest belonging to the poem. I am ready to give up the dialogues in Heaven, where, as Pope justly observes, 'God the Father turns a school-divine'; nor do I consider the battle of the angels as the climax of sublimity, or the most successful effort of Milton's pen. In a word, the interest of the poem arises from the daring ambition and fierce passions of Satan, and from the account of the paradisaical happiness, and the loss of it by our first parents. Three-fourths of the work are taken up with these characters, and nearly all that relates to them is unmixed sublimity and beauty. The two first books alone are like two massy pillars of solid gold.

Satan is the most heroic subject that ever was chosen for a poem; and the execution is as perfect as the design is lofty. He was the first of created beings, who, for endeavouring to be equal with the highest, and to divide the empire of heaven with the Almighty, was hurled down to hell. His aim was no less than the throne of the universe; his means, myriads of angelic armies bright, the third part of the heavens, whom he lured after him with his countenance, and who durst defy the Omnipotent in arms. His ambition was the greatest, and his punishment was the greatest; but not so his despair, for his fortitude was as great as his sufferings. His strength of mind was matchless as his strength of body; the vastness of his designs did not surpass the firm, inflexible determination with which he submitted to his irreversible doom, and final loss of all good. His power of action and of suffering was equal. He was the greatest power that was ever overthrown, with the strongest will left to resist or to endure. He was baffled, not confounded. He stood like a tower; or

> '———— As when Heaven's fire
> Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines'

He was still surrounded with hosts of rebel angels, armed warriors, who own him as their sovereign leader, and with whose fate he sympathises as he views them round, far as the eye can reach; though he keeps aloof from them in his own mind, and holds supreme counsel only with his own breast. An outcast from Heaven, Hell trembles beneath his feet, Sin and Death are at his heels, and mankind are his easy prey.

> 'All is not lost; th' unconquerable will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield,
> And what else is not to be overcome,'

are still his. The sense of his punishment seems lost in the magnitude of it; the fierceness of tormenting flames is qualified and made innoxious by the greater fierceness of his pride; the loss of infinite happiness to himself is compensated in thought, by the power of inflicting infinite misery on others. Yet Satan is not the principle of malignity, or of the abstract love of evil—but of the abstract love of power, of pride, of self-will personified, to which last principle all other good and evil, and even his own, are subordinate. From this principle he never once flinches. His love of power and contempt for suffering are never once relaxed from the highest pitch of intensity. His thoughts burn like a hell within him; but the power of thought holds dominion in his mind over every other consideration. The consciousness of a determined purpose, of 'that intellectual being, those thoughts that wander through eternity,' though accompanied with endless pain, he prefers to nonentity, to 'being swallowed up and lost in the wide womb of uncreated night.' He expresses the sum and substance of all ambition in one line. 'Fallen cherub, to be weak is miserable, doing or suffering!' After such a conflict as his, and such a defeat, to retreat in order, to rally, to make terms, to exist at all, is something; but he does more than this—he founds a new empire in hell, and from it conquers this new world, whither he bends his undaunted flight, forcing his way through nether and surrounding fires. The poet has not in all this given us a mere shadowy outline; the strength is equal to the magnitude of the conception. The Achilles of Homer is not more distinct; the Titans were not more vast; Prometheus chained to his rock was not a more terrific example of suffering and of crime. Wherever the figure of Satan is introduced, whether he walks or flies, 'rising aloft incumbent on the dusky air,' it is illustrated with the most striking and appropriate images: so that we see it always before us, gigantic, irregular, portentous, uneasy, and disturbed—but dazzling in its faded

splendour, the clouded ruins of a god. The deformity of Satan is only in the depravity of his will; he has no bodily deformity to excite our loathing or disgust. The horns and tail are not there, poor emblems of the unbending, unconquered spirit, of the writhing agonies within. Milton was too magnanimous and open an antagonist to support his argument by the bye-tricks of a hump and cloven foot; to bring into the fair field of controversy the good old catholic prejudices of which Tasso and Dante have availed themselves, and which the mystic German critics would restore. He relied on the justice of his cause, and did not scruple to give the devil his due. Some persons may think that he has carried his liberality too far, and injured the cause he professed to espouse by making him the chief person in his poem. Considering the nature of his subject, he would be equally in danger of running into this fault, from his faith in religion, and his love of rebellion; and perhaps each of these motives had its full share in determining the choice of his subject.

Not only the figure of Satan, but his speeches in council, his soliloquies, his address to Eve, his share in the war in heaven, or in the fall of man, shew the same decided superiority of character. To give only one instance, almost the first speech he makes:

> 'Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,
> Said then the lost archangel, this the seat
> That we must change for Heaven; this mournful gloom
> For that celestial light? Be it so, since he
> Who now is sov'rain can dispose and bid
> What shall be right: farthest from him is best,
> Whom reason hath equal'd, force hath made supreme
> Above his equals. Farewel happy fields,
> Where joy for ever dwells: Hail horrors, hail
> Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell,
> Receive thy new possessor: one who brings
> A mind not to be chang'd by place or time.
> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.
> What matter where, if I be still the same,
> And what I should be, all but less than he
> Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
> We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
> Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
> Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
> To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
> Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven.'

The whole of the speeches and debates in Pandemonium are well worthy of the place and the occasion—with Gods for speakers, and

angels and archangels for hearers. There is a decided manly tone in the arguments and sentiments, an eloquent dogmatism, as if each person spoke from thorough conviction; an excellence which Milton probably borrowed from his spirit of partisanship, or else his spirit of partisanship from the natural firmness and vigour of his mind. In this respect Milton resembles Dante, (the only modern writer with whom he has any thing in common) and it is remarkable that Dante, as well as Milton, was a political partisan. That approximation to the severity of impassioned prose which has been made an objection to Milton's poetry, and which is chiefly to be met with in these bitter invectives, is one of its great excellences. The author might here turn his philippics against Salmasius to good account. The rout in Heaven is like the fall of some mighty structure, nodding to its base, 'with hideous ruin and combustion down.' But, perhaps, of all the passages in Paradise Lost, the description of the employments of the angels during the absence of Satan, some of whom 'retreated in a silent valley, sing with notes angelical to many a harp their own heroic deeds and hapless fall by doom of battle,' is the most perfect example of mingled pathos and sublimity.—What proves the truth of this noble picture in every part, and that the frequent complaint of want of interest in it is the fault of the reader, not of the poet, is that when any interest of a practical kind takes a shape that can be at all turned into this, (and there is little doubt that Milton had some such in his eye in writing it,) each party converts it to its own purposes, feels the absolute identity of these abstracted and high speculations; and that, in fact, a noted political writer of the present day has exhausted nearly the whole account of Satan in the Paradise Lost, by applying it to a character whom he considered as after the devil, (though I do not know whether he would make even that exception) the greatest enemy of the human race. This may serve to shew that Milton's Satan is not a very insipid personage.

Of Adam and Eve it has been said, that the ordinary reader can feel little interest in them, because they have none of the passions, pursuits, or even relations of human life, except that of man and wife, the least interesting of all others, if not to the parties concerned, at least to the by-standers. The preference has on this account been given to Homer, who, it is said, has left very vivid and infinitely diversified pictures of all the passions and affections, public and private, incident to human nature—the relations of son, of brother, parent, friend, citizen, and many others. Longinus preferred the Iliad to the Odyssey, on account of the greater number of battles it contains; but I can neither agree to his criticism, nor assent to the present objection. It is true, there is little action in this part of

Milton's poem; but there is much repose, and more enjoyment. There are none of the every-day occurrences, contentions, disputes, wars, fightings, feuds, jealousies, trades, professions, liveries, and common handicrafts of life; 'no kind of traffic; letters are not known; no use of service, of riches, poverty, contract, succession, bourne, bound of land, tilth, vineyard none; no occupation, no treason, felony, sword, pike, knife, gun, nor need of any engine.' So much the better; thank Heaven, all these were yet to come. But still the die was cast, and in them our doom was sealed. In them

> 'The generations were prepared; the pangs,
> The internal pangs, were ready, the dread strife
> Of poor humanity's afflicted will,
> Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny.'

In their first false step we trace all our future woe, with loss of Eden. But there was a short and precious interval between, like the first blush of morning before the day is overcast with tempest, the dawn of the world, the birth of nature from 'the unapparent deep,' with its first dews and freshness on its cheek, breathing odours. Theirs was the first delicious taste of life, and on them depended all that was to come of it. In them hung trembling all our hopes and fears. They were as yet alone in the world, in the eye of nature, wondering at their new being, full of enjoyment and enraptured with one another, with the voice of their Maker walking in the garden, and ministering angels attendant on their steps, winged messengers from heaven like rosy clouds descending in their sight. Nature played around them her virgin fancies wild; and spread for them a repast where no crude surfeit reigned. Was there nothing in this scene, which God and nature alone witnessed, to interest a modern critic? What need was there of action, where the heart was full of bliss and innocence without it! They had nothing to do but feel their own happiness, and 'know to know no more.' 'They toiled not, neither did they spin; yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.' All things seem to acquire fresh sweetness, and to be clothed with fresh beauty in their sight. They tasted as it were for themselves and us, of all that there ever was pure in human bliss. 'In them the burthen of the mystery, the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world, is lightened.' They stood awhile perfect, but they afterwards fell, and were driven out of Paradise, tasting the first fruits of bitterness as they had done of bliss. But their pangs were such as a pure spirit might feel at the sight —their tears 'such as angels weep.' The pathos is of that mild

contemplative kind which arises from regret for the loss of unspeakable happiness, and resignation to inevitable fate. There is none of the fierceness of intemperate passion, none of the agony of mind and turbulence of action, which is the result of the habitual struggles of the will with circumstances, irritated by repeated disappointment, and constantly setting its desires most eagerly on that which there is an impossibility of attaining. This would have destroyed the beauty of the whole picture. They had received their unlooked-for happiness as a free gift from their Creator's hands, and they submitted to its loss, not without sorrow, but without impious and stubborn repining.

> 'In either hand the hast'ning angel caught
> Our ling'ring parents, and to th' eastern gate
> Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
> To the subjected plain; then disappear'd.
> They looking back, all th' eastern side beheld
> Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
> Wav'd over by that flaming brand, the gate
> With dreadful faces throng'd, and fiery arms:
> Some natural tears they dropt, but wip'd them soon;
> The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.'

LECTURE IV

ON DRYDEN AND POPE

Dryden and Pope are the great masters of the artificial style of poetry in our language, as the poets of whom I have already treated, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton, were of the natural; and though this artificial style is generally and very justly acknowledged to be inferior to the other, yet those who stand at the head of that class, ought, perhaps, to rank higher than those who occupy an inferior place in a superior class. They have a clear and independent claim upon our gratitude, as having produced a kind and degree of excellence which existed equally nowhere else. What has been done well by some later writers of the highest style of poetry, is included in, and obscured by a greater degree of power and genius in those before them: what has been done best by poets of an entirely distinct turn of mind, stands by itself, and tells for its whole amount. Young, for instance, Gray, or Akenside, only follow in the train of Milton and Shakspeare: Pope and Dryden walk by their side, though of an unequal stature, and are entitled to a first place in the

lists of fame. This seems to be not only the reason of the thing, but the common sense of mankind, who, without any regular process of reflection, judge of the merit of a work, not more by its inherent and absolute worth, than by its originality and capacity of gratifying a different faculty of the mind, or a different class of readers; for it should be recollected, that there may be readers (as well as poets) not of the highest class, though very good sort of people, and not altogether to be despised.

The question, whether Pope was a poet, has hardly yet been settled, and is hardly worth settling; for if he was not a great poet, he must have been a great prose-writer, that is, he was a great writer of some sort. He was a man of exquisite faculties, and of the most refined taste; and as he chose verse (the most obvious distinction of poetry) as the vehicle to express his ideas, he has generally passed for a poet, and a good one. If, indeed, by a great poet, we mean one who gives the utmost grandeur to our conceptions of nature, or the utmost force to the passions of the heart, Pope was not in this sense a great poet; for the bent, the characteristic power of his mind, lay the clean contrary way; namely, in representing things as they appear to the indifferent observer, stripped of prejudice and passion, as in his Critical Essays; or in representing them in the most contemptible and insignificant point of view, as in his Satires; or in clothing the little with mock-dignity, as in his poems of Fancy; or in adorning the trivial incidents and familiar relations of life with the utmost elegance of expression, and all the flattering illusions of friendship or self-love, as in his Epistles. He was not then distinguished as a poet of lofty enthusiasm, of strong imagination, with a passionate sense of the beauties of nature, or a deep insight into the workings of the heart; but he was a wit, and a critic, a man of sense, of observation, and the world, with a keen relish for the elegances of art, or of nature when embellished by art, a quick tact for propriety of thought and manners as established by the forms and customs of society, a refined sympathy with the sentiments and habitudes of human life, as he felt them within the little circle of his family and friends. He was, in a word, the poet, not of nature, but of art; and the distinction between the two, as well as I can make it out, is this—The poet of nature is one who, from the elements of beauty, of power, and of passion in his own breast, sympathises with whatever is beautiful, and grand, and impassioned in nature, in its simple majesty, in its immediate appeal to the senses, to the thoughts and hearts of all men; so that the poet of nature, by the truth, and depth, and harmony of his mind, may be said to hold communion with the very soul of nature; to be identified with and to foreknow and to record the

feelings of all men at all times and places, as they are liable to the same impressions; and to exert the same power over the minds of his readers, that nature does. He sees things in their eternal beauty, for he sees them as they are; he feels them in their universal interest, for he feels them as they affect the first principles of his and our common nature. Such was Homer, such was Shakspeare, whose works will last as long as nature, because they are a copy of the indestructible forms and everlasting impulses of nature, welling out from the bosom as from a perennial spring, or stamped upon the senses by the hand of their maker. The power of the imagination in them, is the representative power of all nature. It has its centre in the human soul, and makes the circuit of the universe.

Pope was not assuredly a poet of this class, or in the first rank of it. He saw nature only dressed by art; he judged of beauty by fashion; he sought for truth in the opinions of the world; he judged of the feelings of others by his own. The capacious soul of Shakspeare had an intuitive and mighty sympathy with whatever could enter into the heart of man in all possible circumstances: Pope had an exact knowledge of all that he himself loved or hated, wished or wanted. Milton has winged his daring flight from heaven to earth, through Chaos and old Night. Pope's Muse never wandered with safety, but from his library to his grotto, or from his grotto into his library back again. His mind dwelt with greater pleasure on his own garden, than on the garden of Eden; he could describe the faultless whole-length mirror that reflected his own person, better than the smooth surface of the lake that reflects the face of heaven—a piece of cut glass or a pair of paste buckles with more brilliance and effect, than a thousand dew-drops glittering in the sun. He would be more delighted with a patent lamp, than with 'the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow,' that fills the skies with its soft silent lustre, that trembles through the cottage window, and cheers the watchful mariner on the lonely wave. In short, he was the poet of personality and of polished life. That which was nearest to him, was the greatest; the fashion of the day bore sway in his mind over the immutable laws of nature. He preferred the artificial to the natural in external objects, because he had a stronger fellow-feeling with the self-love of the maker or proprietor of a gewgaw, than admiration of that which was interesting to all mankind. He preferred the artificial to the natural in passion, because the involuntary and uncalculating impulses of the one hurried him away with a force and vehemence with which he could not grapple; while he could trifle with the conventional and superficial modifications of mere sentiment at will, laugh at or admire, put them on or off like a masquerade-dress, make much or little of them,

indulge them for a longer or a shorter time, as he pleased; and because while they amused his fancy and exercised his ingenuity, they never once disturbed his vanity, his levity, or indifference. His mind was the antithesis of strength and grandeur; its power was the power of indifference. He had none of the enthusiasm of poetry; he was in poetry what the sceptic is in religion.

It cannot be denied, that his chief excellence lay more in diminishing, than in aggrandizing objects; in checking, not in encouraging our enthusiasm; in sneering at the extravagances of fancy or passion, instead of giving a loose to them; in describing a row of pins and needles, rather than the embattled spears of Greeks and Trojans; in penning a lampoon or a compliment, and in praising Martha Blount.

Shakspeare says,

> '———In Fortune's ray and brightness
> The herd hath more annoyance by the brize
> Than by the tyger: but when the splitting wind
> Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks,
> And flies fled under shade, why then
> The thing of courage,
> As roused with rage, with rage doth sympathise;
> And with an accent tuned in the self-same key,
> Replies to chiding Fortune.'

There is none of this rough work in Pope. His Muse was on a peace-establishment, and grew somewhat effeminate by long ease and indulgence. He lived in the smiles of fortune, and basked in the favour of the great. In his smooth and polished verse we meet with no prodigies of nature, but with miracles of wit; the thunders of his pen are whispered flatteries; its forked lightnings pointed sarcasms; for 'the gnarled oak,' he gives us 'the soft myrtle': for rocks, and seas, and mountains, artificial grass-plats, gravel-walks, and tinkling rills; for earthquakes and tempests, the breaking of a flower-pot, or the fall of a china jar; for the tug and war of the elements, or the deadly strife of the passions, we have

> 'Calm contemplation and poetic ease.'

Yet within this retired and narrow circle how much, and that how exquisite, was contained! What discrimination, what wit, what delicacy, what fancy, what lurking spleen, what elegance of thought, what pampered refinement of sentiment! It is like looking at the world through a microscope, where every thing assumes a new character and a new consequence, where things are seen in their

minutest circumstances and slightest shades of difference; where the little becomes gigantic, the deformed beautiful, and the beautiful deformed. The wrong end of the magnifier is, to be sure, held to every thing, but still the exhibition is highly curious, and we know not whether to be most pleased or surprised. Such, at least, is the best account I am able to give of this extraordinary man, without doing injustice to him or others. It is time to refer to particular instances in his works.—The Rape of the Lock is the best or most ingenious of these. It is the most exquisite specimen of *fillagree* work ever invented. It is admirable in proportion as it is made of nothing.

> 'More subtle web Arachne cannot spin,
> Nor the fine nets, which oft we woven see
> Of scorched dew, do not in th' air more lightly flee.'

It is made of gauze and silver spangles. The most glittering appearance is given to every thing, to paste, pomatum, billet-doux, and patches. Airs, languid airs, breathe around;—the atmosphere is perfumed with affectation. A toilette is described with the solemnity of an altar raised to the Goddess of vanity, and the history of a silver bodkin is given with all the pomp of heraldry. No pains are spared, no profusion of ornament, no splendour of poetic diction, to set off the meanest things. The balance between the concealed irony and the assumed gravity, is as nicely trimmed as the balance of power in Europe. The little is made great, and the great little. You hardly know whether to laugh or weep. It is the triumph of insignificance, the apotheosis of foppery and folly. It is the perfection of the mock-heroic! I will give only the two following passages in illustration of these remarks. Can any thing be more elegant and graceful than the description of Belinda, in the beginning of the second canto?

> 'Not with more glories, in the ethereal plain,
> The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
> Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
> Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames.
> Fair nymphs, and well-drest youths around her shone,
> But ev'ry eye was fix'd on her alone.
> On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
> Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
> Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
> Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those:
> Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
> Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
> Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike;
> And like the sun, they shine on all alike.

Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide:
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you 'll forget 'em all.

This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourish'd two locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspir'd to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck.'

The following is the introduction to the account of Belinda's assault upon the baron bold, who had dissevered one of these locks 'from her fair head for ever and for ever.'

'Now meet thy fate, incens'd Belinda cry'd,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
(The same his ancient personage to deck,
Her great, great grandsire wore about his neck,
In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,
Form'd a vast buckle for his widow's gown:
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin grac'd her mother's hairs,
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears).'

I do not know how far Pope was indebted for the original idea, or the delightful execution of this poem, to the Lutrin of Boileau.

The Rape of the Lock is a double-refined essence of wit and fancy, as the Essay on Criticism is of wit and sense. The quantity of thought and observation in this work, for so young a man as Pope was when he wrote it, is wonderful: unless we adopt the supposition, that most men of genius spend the rest of their lives in teaching others what they themselves have learned under twenty. The conciseness and felicity of the expression are equally remarkable. Thus in reasoning on the variety of men's opinion, he says—

''Tis with our judgments, as our watches; none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.'

Nothing can be more original and happy than the general remarks and illustrations in the Essay: the critical rules laid down are too much those of a school, and of a confined one. There is one passage in the Essay on Criticism in which the author speaks with that eloquent enthusiasm of the fame of ancient writers, which those will always feel who have themselves any hope or chance of

immortality. I have quoted the passage elsewhere, but I will repeat it here.

> 'Still green with bays each ancient altar stands,
> Above the reach of sacrilegious hands;
> Secure from flames, from envy's fiercer rage,
> Destructive war, and all-involving age.
> Hail, bards triumphant, born in happier days,
> Immortal heirs of universal praise!
> Whose honours with increase of ages grow,
> As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow.'

These lines come with double force and beauty on the reader, as they were dictated by the writer's despair of ever attaining that lasting glory which he celebrates with such disinterested enthusiasm in others, from the lateness of the age in which he lived, and from his writing in a tongue, not understood by other nations, and that grows obsolete and unintelligible to ourselves at the end of every second century. But he needed not have thus antedated his own poetical doom—the loss and entire oblivion of that which can never die. If he had known, he might have boasted that 'his little bark' wafted down the stream of time,

> '—— —— With *theirs* should sail,
> Pursue the triumph and partake the gale'—

if those who know how to set a due value on the blessing, were not the last to decide confidently on their own pretensions to it.

There is a cant in the present day about genius, as every thing in poetry: there was a cant in the time of Pope about sense, as performing all sorts of wonders. It was a kind of watchword, the shibboleth of a critical party of the day. As a proof of the exclusive attention which it occupied in their minds, it is remarkable that in the Essay on Criticism (not a very long poem) there are no less than half a score successive couplets rhyming to the word *sense*. This appears almost incredible without giving the instances, and no less so when they are given.

> 'But of the two, less dangerous is the offence,
> To tire our patience than mislead our sense.'—*lines* 3, 4.

> 'In search of wit these lose their common sense,
> And then turn critics in their own defence.'—*l.* 28, 29.

> 'Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defence,
> And fills up all the mighty void of sense.'—*l.* 209, 10.

> 'Some by old words to fame have made pretence,
> Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense.'—*l.* 324, 5.

> ''Tis not enough no harshness gives offence;
> The sound must seem an echo to the sense.'—*l.* 364, 5.
>
> 'At every trifle scorn to take offence;
> That always shews great pride, or little sense.'—*l.* 386, 7.
>
> 'Be silent always, when you doubt your sense,
> And speak, though sure, with seeming diffidence.'—*l.* 366, 7.
>
> 'Be niggards of advice on no pretence,
> For the worst avarice is that of sense.'—*l.* 578, 9.
>
> 'Strain out the last dull dropping of their sense,
> And rhyme with all the rage of impotence.'—*l.* 608, 9.
>
> 'Horace still charms with graceful negligence,
> And without method talks us into sense.'—*l.* 653, 4.

I have mentioned this the more for the sake of those critics who are bigotted idolisers of our author, chiefly on the score of his correctness. These persons seem to be of opinion that 'there is but one perfect writer, even Pope.' This is, however, a mistake: his excellence is by no means faultlessness. If he had no great faults, he is full of little errors. His grammatical construction is often lame and imperfect. In the Abelard and Eloise, he says—

> 'There died the best of passions, Love and Fame.'

This is not a legitimate ellipsis. Fame is not a passion, though love is: but his ear was evidently confused by the meeting of the sounds 'love and fame,' as if they of themselves immediately implied 'love, and love of fame.' Pope's rhymes are constantly defective, being rhymes to the eye instead of the ear; and this to a greater degree, not only than in later, but than in preceding writers. The praise of his versification must be confined to its uniform smoothness and harmony. In the translation of the Iliad, which has been considered as his masterpiece in style and execution, he continually changes the tenses in the same sentence for the purposes of the rhyme, which shews either a want of technical resources, or great inattention to punctilious exactness. But to have done with this.

The epistle of Eloise to Abelard is the only exception I can think of, to the general spirit of the foregoing remarks; and I should be disingenuous not to acknowledge that it is an exception. The foundation is in the letters themselves of Abelard and Eloise, which are quite as impressive, but still in a different way. It is fine as a poem: it is finer as a piece of high-wrought eloquence. No woman could be supposed to write a better love-letter in verse. Besides the richness of the historical materials, the high *gusto* of the original

sentiments which Pope had to work upon, there were perhaps circumstances in his own situation which made him enter into the subject with even more than a poet's feeling. The tears shed are drops gushing from the heart: the words are burning sighs breathed from the soul of love. Perhaps the poem to which it bears the greatest similarity in our language, is Dryden's Tancred and Sigismunda, taken from Boccaccio. Pope's Eloise will bear this comparison; and after such a test, with Boccaccio for the original author, and Dryden for the translator, it need shrink from no other. There is something exceedingly tender and beautiful in the sound of the concluding lines:

> 'If ever chance two wandering lovers brings
> To Paraclete's white walls and silver springs,' &c.

The Essay on Man is not Pope's best work. It is a theory which Bolingbroke is supposed to have given him, and which he expanded into verse. But 'he spins the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument.' All that he says, 'the very words, and to the self-same tune,' would prove just as well that whatever is, is *wrong*, as that whatever is, is *right*. The Dunciad has splendid passages, but in general it is dull, heavy, and mechanical. The sarcasm already quoted on Settle, the Lord Mayor's poet, (for at that time there was a city as well as a court poet)

> 'Now night descending, the proud scene is o'er,
> But lives in Settle's numbers one day more'—

is the finest inversion of immortality conceivable. It is even better than his serious apostrophe to the great heirs of glory, the triumphant bards of antiquity!

The finest burst of severe moral invective in all Pope, is the prophetical conclusion of the epilogue to the Satires:

> 'Virtue may chuse the high or low degree,
> 'Tis just alike to virtue, and to me;
> Dwell in a monk, or light upon a king,
> She 's still the same belov'd, contented thing.
> Vice is undone if she forgets her birth,
> And stoops from angels to the dregs of earth.
> But 'tis the Fall degrades her to a whore:
> Let Greatness own her, and she 's mean no more.
> Her birth, her beauty, crowds and courts confess,
> Chaste matrons praise her, and grave bishops bless;
> In golden chains the willing world she draws,
> And hers the gospel is, and hers the laws;

> Mounts the tribunal, lifts her scarlet head,
> And sees pale Virtue carted in her stead.
> Lo! at the wheels of her triumphal car,
> Old England's Genius, rough with many a scar,
> Dragg'd in the dust! his arms hang idly round,
> His flag inverted trains along the ground!
> Our youth, all livery'd o'er with foreign gold,
> Before her dance; behind her, crawl the old!
> See thronging millions to the Pagod run,
> And offer country, parent, wife, or son!
> Hear her black trumpet through the land proclaim,
> That *not to be corrupted is the shame.*
> In soldier, churchman, patriot, man in pow'r,
> 'Tis av'rice all, ambition is no more!
> See all our nobles begging to be slaves!
> See all our fools aspiring to be knaves!
> The wit of cheats, the courage of a whore,
> Are what ten thousand envy and adore:
> All, all look up with reverential awe,
> At crimes that 'scape or triumph o'er the law;
> While truth, worth, wisdom, daily they decry:
> Nothing is sacred now but villainy.
> Yet may this verse (if such a verse remain)
> Show there was one who held it in disdain.'

His Satires are not in general so good as his Epistles. His enmity is effeminate and petulant from a sense of weakness, as his friendship was tender from a sense of gratitude. I do not like, for instance, his character of Chartres, or his characters of women. His delicacy often borders upon sickliness; his fastidiousness makes others fastidious. But his compliments are divine; they are equal in value to a house or an estate. Take the following. In addressing Lord Mansfield, he speaks of the grave as a scene,

> 'Where Murray, long enough his country's pride,
> Shall be no more than Tully, or than Hyde.'

To Bolingbroke he says—

> 'Why rail they then if but one wreath of mine,
> Oh all-accomplish'd St. John, deck thy shrine?'

Again, he has bequeathed this praise to Lord Cornbury—

> 'Despise low thoughts, low gains:
> Disdain whatever Cornbury disdains;
> Be virtuous and be happy for your pains.'

One would think (though there is no knowing) that a descendant of

this nobleman, if there be such a person living, could hardly be guilty of a mean or paltry action.

The finest piece of personal satire in Pope (perhaps in the world) is his character of Addison; and this, it may be observed, is of a mixed kind, made up of his respect for the man, and a cutting sense of his failings. The other finest one is that of Buckingham, and the best part of that is the pleasurable.

> '—— Alas! how changed from him,
> That life of pleasure and that soul of whim:
> Gallant and gay, in Cliveden's proud alcove,
> The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love!'

Among his happiest and most inimitable effusions are the Epistles to Arbuthnot, and to Jervas the painter; amiable patterns of the delightful unconcerned life, blending ease with dignity, which poets and painters then led. Thus he says to Arbuthnot—

> 'Why did I write? What sin to me unknown
> Dipp'd me in ink, my parents' or my own?
> As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
> I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.
> I left no calling for this idle trade,
> No duty broke, no father disobey'd:
> The muse but serv'd to ease some friend, not wife;
> To help me through this long disease, my life,
> To second, Arbuthnot! thy art and care,
> And teach the being you preserv'd to bear.
>
> But why then publish? Granville the polite,
> And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write;
> Well-natur'd Garth inflam'd with early praise,
> And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endur'd my lays;
> The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield read;
> E'en mitred Rochester would nod the head;
> And St. John's self (great Dryden's friend before)
> With open arms receiv'd one poet more.
> Happy my studies, when by these approv'd!
> Happier their author, when by these belov'd!
> From these the world will judge of men and books,
> Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cooks.'

I cannot help giving also the conclusion of the Epistle to Jervas.

> 'Oh, lasting as those colours may they shine,
> Free as thy stroke, yet faultless as thy line;
> New graces yearly like thy works display,
> Soft without weakness, without glaring gay;

> Led by some rule, that guides, but not constrains;
> And finish'd more through happiness than pains.
> The kindred arts shall in their praise conspire,
> One dip the pencil, and one string the lyre.
> Yet should the Graces all thy figures place,
> And breathe an air divine on ev'ry face;
> Yet should the Muses bid my numbers roll
> Strong as their charms, and gentle as their soul;
> With Zeuxis' Helen thy Bridgewater vie,
> And these be sung till Granville's Myra die:
> Alas! how little from the grave we claim!
> Thou but preserv'st a face, and I a name.'

And shall we cut ourselves off from beauties like these with a theory? Shall we shut up our books, and seal up our senses, to please the dull spite and inordinate vanity of those 'who have eyes, but they see not—ears, but they hear not—and understandings, but they understand not,'—and go about asking our blind guides, whether Pope was a poet or not? It will never do. Such persons, when you point out to them a fine passage in Pope, turn it off to something of the same sort in some other writer. Thus they say that the line, 'I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came,' is pretty, but taken from that of Ovid—*Et quum conabar scribere, versus erat*. They are safe in this mode of criticism: there is no danger of any one's tracing their writings to the classics.

Pope's letters and prose writings neither take away from, nor add to his poetical reputation. There is, occasionally, a littleness of manner, and an unnecessary degree of caution. He appears anxious to say a good thing in every word, as well as every sentence. They, however, give a very favourable idea of his moral character in all respects; and his letters to Atterbury, in his disgrace and exile, do equal honour to both. If I had to choose, there are one or two persons, and but one or two, that I should like to have been better than Pope!

Dryden was a better prose-writer, and a bolder and more varied versifier than Pope. He was a more vigorous thinker, a more correct and logical declaimer, and had more of what may be called strength of mind than Pope; but he had not the same refinement and delicacy of feeling. Dryden's eloquence and spirit were possessed in a higher degree by others, and in nearly the same degree by Pope himself; but that by which Pope was distinguished, was an essence which he alone possessed, and of incomparable value on that sole account. Dryden's Epistles are excellent, but inferior to Pope's, though they appear (particularly the admirable one to Congreve) to have been the model on which the latter formed his. His Satires

are better than Pope's. His Absalom and Achitophel is superior, both in force of invective and discrimination of character, to any thing of Pope's in the same way. The character of Achitophel is very fine; and breathes, if not a sincere love for virtue, a strong spirit of indignation against vice.

Mac Flecknoe is the origin of the idea of the Dunciad; but it is less elaborately constructed, less feeble, and less heavy. The difference between Pope's satirical portraits and Dryden's, appears to be this in a good measure, that Dryden seems to grapple with his antagonists, and to describe real persons; Pope seems to refine upon them in his own mind, and to make them out just what he pleases, till they are not real characters, but the mere driveling effusions of his spleen and malice. Pope describes the thing, and then goes on describing his own description till he loses himself in verbal repetitions. Dryden recurs to the object often, takes fresh sittings of nature, and gives us new strokes of character as well as of his pencil. The Hind and Panther is an allegory as well as a satire; and so far it tells less home; the battery is not so point-blank. But otherwise it has more genius, vehemence, and strength of description than any other of Dryden's works, not excepting the Absalom and Achitophel. It also contains the finest examples of varied and sounding versification. I will quote the following as an instance of what I mean. He is complaining of the treatment which the Papists, under James II. received from the church of England.

> 'Besides these jolly birds, whose corpse impure
> Repaid their commons with their salt manure,
> Another farm he had behind his house,
> Not overstocked, but barely for his use;
> Wherein his poor domestic poultry fed,
> And from his pious hand 'received their bread.'
> Our pampered pigeons, with malignant eyes,
> Beheld these inmates, and their nurseries;
> Though hard their fare, at evening, and at morn
> (A cruise of water, and an ear of corn,)
> Yet still they grudged that *modicum*, and thought
> A sheaf in every single grain was brought.
> Fain would they filch that little food away,
> While unrestrained those happy gluttons prey;
> And much they grieved to see so nigh their hall,
> The bird that warned St. Peter of his fall;
> That he should raise his mitred crest on high,
> And clap his wings, and call his family
> To sacred rites; and vex the ethereal powers
> With midnight mattins at uncivil hours;

> Nay more, his quiet neighbours should molest,
> Just in the sweetness of their morning rest.
> Beast of a bird! supinely when he might
> Lie snug and sleep, to rise before the light!
> What if his dull forefathers us'd that cry,
> Could he not let a bad example die?
> The world was fallen into an easier way:
> This age knew better than to fast and pray.
> Good sense in sacred worship would appear,
> So to begin as they might end the year.
> Such feats in former times had wrought the falls
> Of crowing chanticleers in cloister'd walls.
> Expell'd for this, and for their lands they fled;
> And sister Partlet with her hooded head
> Was hooted hence, because she would not pray a-bed.'

There is a magnanimity of abuse in some of these epithets, a fearless choice of topics of invective, which may be considered as the heroical in satire.

The *Annus Mirabilis* is a tedious performance; it is a tissue of far-fetched, heavy, lumbering conceits, and in the worst style of what has been denominated metaphysical poetry. His Odes in general are of the same stamp; they are the hard-strained offspring of a meagre, meretricious fancy. The famous Ode on St. Cecilia deserves its reputation; for, as piece of poetical mechanism to be set to music, or recited in alternate strophe and antistrophe, with classical allusions, and flowing verse, nothing can be better. It is equally fit to be said or sung; it is not equally good to read. It is lyrical, without being epic or dramatic. For instance, the description of Bacchus,

> 'The jolly god in triumph comes,
> Sound the trumpets, beat the drums;
> Flush'd with a purple grace,
> He shews his honest face'—

does not answer, as it ought, to our idea of the God, returning from the conquest of India, with satyrs and wild beasts, that he had tamed, following in his train; crowned with vine leaves, and riding in a chariot drawn by leopards—such as we have seen him painted by Titian or Rubens! Lyrical poetry, of all others, bears the nearest resemblance to painting: it deals in hieroglyphics and passing figures, which depend for effect, not on the working out, but on the selection. It is the dance and pantomime of poetry. In variety and rapidity of movement, the Alexander's Feast has all that can be required in this respect; it only wants loftiness and truth of character.

Dryden's plays are better than Pope could have written; for

though he does not go out of himself by the force of imagination, he goes out of himself by the force of common-places and rhetorical dialogue. On the other hand, they are not so good as Shakspeare's; but he has left the best character of Shakspeare that has ever been written.[1]

His alterations from Chaucer and Boccaccio shew a greater knowledge of the taste of his readers and power of pleasing them, than acquaintance with the genius of his authors. He ekes out the lameness of the verse in the former, and breaks the force of the passion in both. The Tancred and Sigismunda is the only general exception, in which, I think, he has fully retained, if not improved upon, the impassioned declamation of the original. The Honoria has none of the bewildered, dreary, preternatural effect of Boccaccio's story. Nor has the Flower and the Leaf any thing of the enchanting simplicity and concentrated feeling of Chaucer's romantic fiction. Dryden, however, sometimes seemed to indulge himself as well as his readers, as in keeping entire that noble line in Palamon's address to Venus:

'Thou gladder of the mount of Cithæron!'

His Tales have been, upon the whole, the most popular of his works; and I should think that a translation of some of the other serious tales in Boccaccio and Chaucer, as that of Isabella, the Falcon, of Constance, the Prioress's Tale, and others, if executed with taste and spirit, could not fail to succeed in the present day.

It should appear, in tracing the history of our literature, that poetry had, at the period of which we are speaking, in general declined, by successive gradations, from the poetry of imagination, in the time of Elizabeth, to the poetry of fancy (to adopt a modern distinction) in the time of Charles I.; and again from the poetry of fancy to that of wit, as in the reign of Charles II. and Queen Anne. It degenerated into the poetry of mere common places, both in style

[1] 'To begin then with Shakspeare: he was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily: when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned: he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards and found her there. I cannot say, he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, and insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him. No man can say, he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

Quantum lenta solent inter Viburna Cupressi.'

and thought, in the succeeding reigns: as in the latter part of the last century, it was transformed, by means of the French Revolution, into the poetry of paradox.

Of Donne I know nothing but some beautiful verses to his wife, dissuading her from accompanying him on his travels abroad, and some quaint riddles in verse, which the Sphinx could not unravel.

Waller still lives in the name of Sacharissa; and his lines on the death of Oliver Cromwell shew that he was a man not without genius and strength of thought.

Marvel is a writer of nearly the same period, and worthy of a better age. Some of his verses are harsh, as the words of Mercury; others musical, as is Apollo's lute. Of the latter kind are his boat-song, his description of a fawn, and his lines to Lady Vere. His lines prefixed to Paradise Lost are by no means the most favourable specimen of his powers.

Butler's Hudibras is a poem of more wit than any other in the language. The rhymes have as much genius in them as the thoughts; but there is no story in it, and but little humour. Humour is the making others act or talk absurdly and unconsciously: wit is the pointing out and ridiculing that absurdity consciously, and with more or less ill-nature. The fault of Butler's poem is not that it has too much wit, but that it has not an equal quantity of other things. One would suppose that the starched manners and sanctified grimace of the times in which he lived, would of themselves have been sufficiently rich in ludicrous incidents and characters; but they seem rather to have irritated his spleen, than to have drawn forth his powers of picturesque imitation. Certainly if we compare Hudibras with Don Quixote in this respect, it seems rather a meagre and unsatisfactory performance.

Rochester's poetry is the poetry of wit combined with the love of pleasure, of thought with licentiousness. His extravagant heedless levity has a sort of passionate enthusiasm in it; his contempt for every thing that others respect, almost amounts to sublimity. His poem upon Nothing is itself no trifling work. His epigrams were the bitterest, the least laboured, and the truest, that ever were written.

Sir John Suckling was of the same mercurial stamp, but with a greater fund of animal spirits; as witty, but less malicious. His Ballad on a Wedding is perfect in its kind, and has a spirit of high enjoyment in it, of sportive fancy, a liveliness of description, and a truth of nature, that never were surpassed. It is superior to either Gay or Prior; for with all their *naïveté* and terseness, it has a Shakspearian grace and luxuriance about it, which they could not have reached.

Denham and Cowley belong to the same period, but were quite distinct from each other: the one was grave and prosing, the other melancholy and fantastical. There are a number of good lines and good thoughts in the Cooper's Hill. And in Cowley there is an inexhaustible fund of sense and ingenuity, buried in inextricable conceits, and entangled in the cobwebs of the schools. He was a great man, not a great poet. But I shall say no more on this subject. I never wish to meddle with names that are sacred, unless when they stand in the way of things that are more sacred.

Withers is a name now almost forgotten, and his works seldom read; but his poetry is not unfrequently distinguished by a tender and pastoral turn of thought; and there is one passage of exquisite feeling, describing the consolations of poetry in the following terms:

> 'She doth tell me where to borrow
> Comfort in the midst of sorrow;
> Makes the desolatest place[1]
> To her presence be a grace;
> And the blackest discontents
> Be her fairest ornaments.
> In my former days of bliss
> Her divine skill taught me this,
> That from every thing I saw,
> I could some invention draw;
> And raise pleasure to her height,
> Through the meanest object's sight,
> By the murmur of a spring,
> Or the least bough's rusteling,
> By a daisy whose leaves spread
> Shut when Titan goes to bed;
> Or a shady bush or tree,
> She could more infuse in me,
> Than all Nature's beauties can,
> In some other wiser man.
> By her help I also now
> Make this churlish place allow
> Some things that may sweeten gladness
> In the very gall of sadness.
> The dull loneness, the black shade,
> That these hanging vaults have made,
> The strange music of the waves,
> Beating on these hollow caves,
> This black den which rocks emboss,
> Overgrown with eldest moss,
> The rude portals that give light
> More to terror than delight,

[1] Written in the Fleet Prison.

This my chamber of neglect,
Wall'd about with disrespect,
From all these and this dull air,
A fit object for despair,
She hath taught me by her might
To draw comfort and delight.
Therefore, thou best earthly bliss,
I will cherish thee for this.
Poesie; thou sweet'st content
That ere Heav'n to mortals lent:
Though they as a trifle leave thee,
Whose dull thoughts cannot conceive thee,
Though thou be to them a scorn,
That to nought but earth are born:
Let my life no longer be
Than I am in love with thee.
Though our wise ones call thee madness,
Let me never taste of sadness,
If I love not thy maddest fits,
Above all their greatest wits.
And though some too seeming holy,
Do account thy raptures folly,
Thou dost teach me to contemn
What makes knaves and fools of them.'

LECTURE V

ON THOMSON AND COWPER

Thomson, the kind-hearted Thomson, was the most indolent of mortals and of poets. But he was also one of the best both of mortals and of poets. Dr. Johnson makes it his praise that he wrote 'no line which dying he would wish to blot.' Perhaps a better proof of his honest simplicity, and inoffensive goodness of disposition, would be that he wrote no line which any other person living would wish that he should blot. Indeed, he himself wished, on his death-bed, formally to expunge his dedication of one of the Seasons to that finished courtier, and candid biographer of his own life, Bub Doddington. As critics, however, not as moralists, we might say on the other hand—'Would he had blotted a thousand!'—The same suavity of temper and sanguine warmth of feeling which threw such a natural grace and genial spirit of enthusiasm over his poetry, was also the cause of its inherent vices and defects. He is affected through carelessness: pompous from unsuspecting simplicity of

character. He is frequently pedantic and ostentatious in his style, because he had no consciousness of these vices in himself. He mounts upon stilts, not out of vanity, but indolence. He seldom writes a good line, but he makes up for it by a bad one. He takes advantage of all the most trite and mechanical common-places of imagery and diction as a kindly relief to his Muse, and as if he thought them quite as good, and likely to be quite as acceptable to the reader, as his own poetry. He did not think the difference worth putting himself to the trouble of accomplishing. He had too little art to conceal his art: oı did not even seem to know that there was any occasion for it. His art is as naked and undisguised as his nature; the one is as pure and genuine as the other is gross, gaudy, and meretricious.—All that is admirable in the Seasons, is the emanation of a fine natural genius, and sincere love of his subject, unforced, unstudied, that comes uncalled for, and departs unbidden. But he takes no pains, uses no self-correction; or if he seems to labour, it is worse than labour lost. His genius 'cannot be constrained by mastery.' The feeling of nature, of the changes of the seasons, was in his mind; and he could not help conveying this feeling to the reader, by the mere force of spontaneous expression; but if the expression did not come of itself, he left the whole business to chance; or, willing to evade instead of encountering the difficulties of his subject, fills up the intervals of true inspiration with the most vapid and worthless materials, pieces out a beautiful half line with a bombastic allusion, or overloads an exquisitely natural sentiment or image with a cloud of painted, pompous, cumbrous phrases, like the shower of roses, in which he represents the Spring, his own lovely, fresh, and innocent Spring, as descending to the earth.

> 'Come, gentle Spring! ethereal Mildness! come,
> And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
> While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower
> Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend.'

Who, from such a flimsy, round-about, unmeaning commencement as this, would expect the delightful, unexaggerated, home-felt descriptions of natural scenery, which are scattered in such unconscious profusion through this and the following cantos? For instance, the very next passage is crowded with a set of striking images.

> 'And see where surly Winter passes off
> Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts:
> His blasts obey, and quit the howling hill,
> The shatter'd forest, and the ravag'd vale;
> While softer gales succeed, at whose kind touch

Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost,
The mountains lift their green heads to the sky.
As yet the trembling year is unconfirmed,
And Winter oft at eve resumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightless; so that scarce
The bittern knows his time with bill ingulpht
To shake the sounding marsh, or from the shore
The plovers when to scatter o'er the heath,
And sing their wild notes to the list'ning waste.'

Thomson is the best of our descriptive poets: for he gives most of the poetry of natural description. Others have been quite equal to him, or have surpassed him, as Cowper for instance, in the picturesque part of his art, in marking the peculiar features and curious details of objects;—no one has yet come up to him in giving the sum total of their effects, their varying influences on the mind. He does not go into the *minutiæ* of a landscape, but describes the vivid impression which the whole makes upon his own imagination; and thus transfers the same unbroken, unimpaired impression to the imagination of his readers. The colours with which he paints seem yet wet and breathing, like those of the living statue in the Winter's Tale. Nature in his descriptions is seen growing around us, fresh and lusty as in itself. We feel the effect of the atmosphere, its humidity or clearness, its heat or cold, the glow of summer, the gloom of winter, the tender promise of the spring, the full overshadowing foliage, the declining pomp and deepening tints of autumn. He transports us to the scorching heat of vertical suns, or plunges us into the chilling horrors and desolation of the frozen zone. We hear the snow drifting against the broken casement without, and see the fire blazing on the hearth within. The first scattered drops of a vernal shower patter on the leaves above our heads, or the coming storm resounds through the leafless groves. In a word, he describes not to the eye alone, but to the other senses, and to the whole man. He puts his heart into his subject, writes as he feels, and humanises whatever he touches. He makes all his descriptions teem with life and vivifying soul. His faults were those of his style—of the author and the man; but the original genius of the poet, the pith and marrow of his imagination, the fine natural mould in which his feelings were bedded, were too much for him to counteract by neglect, or affectation, or false ornaments. It is for this reason that he is, perhaps, the most popular of all our poets, treating of a subject that all can understand, and in a way that is interesting to all alike, to the ignorant or the refined, because he gives back the impression which the things

themselves make upon us in nature. 'That,' said a man of genius, seeing a little shabby soiled copy of Thomson's Seasons lying on the window-seat of an obscure country alehouse—'That is true fame!'

It has been supposed by some, that the Castle of Indolence is Thomson's best poem; but that is not the case. He has in it, indeed, poured out the whole soul of indolence, diffuse, relaxed, supine, dissolved into a voluptuous dream; and surrounded himself with a set of objects and companions, in entire unison with the listlessness of his own temper. Nothing can well go beyond the descriptions of these inmates of the place, and their luxurious pampered way of life—of him who came among them like 'a burnished fly in month of June,' but soon left them on his heedless way; and him,

> 'For whom the merry bells had rung, I ween,
> If in this nook of quiet, bells had ever been.'

The in-door quiet and cushioned ease, where 'all was one full-swelling bed'; the out-of-door stillness, broken only by 'the stock-dove's plaint amid the forest deep,'

> 'That drowsy rustled to the sighing gale'—

are in the most perfect and delightful keeping. But still there are no passages in this exquisite little production of sportive ease and fancy, equal to the best of those in the Seasons. Warton, in his Essay on Pope, was the first to point out and do justice to some of these; for instance, to the description of the effects of the contagion among our ships at Carthagena—'of the frequent corse heard nightly plunged amid the sullen waves,' and to the description of the pilgrims lost in the deserts of Arabia. This last passage, profound and striking as it is, is not free from those faults of style which I have already noticed.

> '————Breath'd hot
> From all the boundless furnace of the sky,
> And the wide-glitt'ring waste of burning sand,
> A suffocating wind the pilgrim smites
> With instant death. Patient of thirst and toil,
> Son of the desert, ev'n the camel feels
> Shot through his wither'd heart the fiery blast.
> Or from the black-red ether, bursting broad,
> Sallies the sudden whirlwind. Straight the sands,
> Commov'd around, in gath'ring eddies play;
> Nearer and nearer still they dark'ning come,
> Till with the gen'ral all-involving storm
> Swept up, the whole continuous wilds arise,
> And by their noon-day fount dejected thrown,

Or sunk at night in sad disastrous sleep,
Beneath descending hills the caravan
Is buried deep. In Cairo's crowded streets,
Th' impatient merchant, wond'ring, waits in vain;
And Mecca saddens at the long delay.'

There are other passages of equal beauty with these; such as that of the hunted stag, followed by 'the inhuman rout,'

-That from the shady depth
Expel him, circling through his ev'ry shift.
He sweeps the forest oft, and sobbing sees
The glades mild op'ning to the golden day,
Where in kind contest with his butting friends
He wont to struggle, or his loves enjoy.'

The whole of the description of the frozen zone, in the Winter, is perhaps even finer and more thoroughly felt, as being done from early associations, that that of the torrid zone in his Summer. Any thing more beautiful than the following account of the Siberian exiles is, I think, hardly to be found in the whole range of poetry.

'There through the prison of unbounded wilds,
Barr'd by the hand of nature from escape,
Wide roams the Russian exile. Nought around
Strikes his sad eye but deserts lost in snow,
And heavy-loaded groves, and solid floods,
That stretch athwart the solitary vast
Their icy horrors to the frozen main;
And cheerless towns far distant, never bless'd,
Save when its annual course the caravan
Bends to the golden coast of rich Cathay,
With news of human kind.'

The feeling of loneliness, of distance, of lingering, slow-revolving years of pining expectation, of desolation within and without the heart, was never more finely expressed than it is here.

The account which follows of the employments of the Polar night —of the journeys of the natives by moonlight, drawn by rein-deer, and of the return of spring in Lapland—

'Where pure Niemi's fairy mountains rise,
And fring'd with roses Tenglio rolls his stream,'

is equally picturesque and striking in a different way. The traveller lost in the snow, is a well-known and admirable dramatic episode. I prefer, however, giving one example of our author's skill in painting common domestic scenery, as it will bear a more immediate comparison with the style of some later writers on such subjects. It is of

little consequence what passage we take. The following description of the first setting in of winter is, perhaps, as pleasing as any.

'Through the hush'd air the whitening shower descends,
At first thin wav'ring, till at last the flakes
Fall broad and wide, and fast, dimming the day
With a continual flow. The cherish'd fields
Put on their winter-robe of purest white:
'Tis brightness all, save where the new snow melts
Along the mazy current. Low the woods
Bow their hoar head; and ere the languid Sun,
Faint, from the West emits his ev'ning ray,
Earth's universal face, deep hid, and chill,
Is one wide dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man. Drooping, the lab'rer-ox
Stands cover'd o'er with snow, and then demands
The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heav'n,
Tam'd by the cruel season, crowd around
The winnowing store, and claim the little boon
Which Providence assigns them. One alone,
The red-breast, sacred to the household Gods,
Wisely regardful of the embroiling sky,
In joyless fields and thorny thickets leaves
His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Half-afraid, he first
Against the window beats; then, brisk, alights
On the warm hearth; then hopping o'er the floor,
Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is:
Till more familiar grown, the table-crumbs
Attract his slender feet. The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare,
Though timorous of heart, and hard beset
By death in various forms, dark snares and dogs,
And more unpitying men, the garden seeks,
Urg'd on by fearless want. The bleating kind
Eye the bleak heav'n, and next, the glist'ning earth,
With looks of dumb despair; then, sad dispers'd,
Dig for the wither'd herb through heaps of snow.'

It is thus that Thomson always gives a *moral sense* to nature.

Thomson's blank verse is not harsh, or utterly untuneable; but it is heavy and monotonous; it seems always labouring up-hill. The selections which have been made from his works in Enfield's Speaker, and other books of extracts, do not convey the most favourable idea of his genius or taste; such as Palemon and Lavinia, Damon and Musidora, Celadon and Amelia. Those parts of any author which are most liable to be stitched in worsted, and framed and

glazed, are not by any means always the best. The moral descriptions and reflections in the Seasons are in an admirable spirit, and written with great force and fervour.

His poem on Liberty is not equally good: his Muse was too easy and good-natured for the subject, which required as much indignation against unjust and arbitrary power, as complacency in the constitutional monarchy, under which, just after the expulsion of the Stuarts and the establishment of the House of Hanover, in contempt of the claims of hereditary pretenders to the throne, Thomson lived. Thomson was but an indifferent hater; and the most indispensable part of the love of liberty has unfortunately hitherto been the hatred of tyranny. Spleen is the soul of patriotism, and of public good: but you would not expect a man who has been seen eating peaches off a tree with both hands in his waistcoat pockets, to be 'overrun with the spleen,' or to heat himself needlessly about an abstract proposition.

His plays are liable to the same objection. They are never acted, and seldom read. The author could not, or would not, put himself out of his way, to enter into the situations and passions of others, particularly of a tragic kind. The subject of Tancred and Sigismunda, which is taken from a serious episode in Gil Blas, is an admirable one, but poorly handled: the ground may be considered as still unoccupied.

Cowper, whom I shall speak of in this connection, lived at a considerable distance of time after Thomson; and had some advantages over him, particularly in simplicity of style, in a certain precision and minuteness of graphical description, and in a more careful and leisurely choice of such topics only as his genius and peculiar habits of mind prompted him to treat of. The Task has fewer blemishes than the Seasons; but it has not the same capital excellence, the 'unbought grace' of poetry, the power of moving and infusing the warmth of the author's mind into that of the reader. If Cowper had a more polished taste, Thomson had, beyond comparison, a more fertile genius, more impulsive force, a more entire forgetfulness of himself in his subject. If in Thomson you are sometimes offended with the slovenliness of the author by profession, determined to get through his task at all events; in Cowper you are no less dissatisfied with the finicalness of the private gentleman, who does not care whether he completes his work or not; and in whatever he does, is evidently more solicitous to please himself than the public. There is an effeminacy about him, which shrinks from and repels common and hearty sympathy. With all his boasted simplicity and love of the country, he seldom launches out into general descriptions of nature: he looks at her over his clipped hedges, and from his well-swept

garden-walks; or if he makes a bolder experiment now and then, it is with an air of precaution, as if he were afraid of being caught in a shower of rain, or of not being able, in case of any untoward accident, to make good his retreat home. He shakes hands with nature with a pair of fashionable gloves on, and leads 'his Vashti' forth to public view with a look of consciousness and attention to etiquette, as a fine gentleman hands a lady out to dance a minuet. He is delicate to fastidiousness, and glad to get back, after a romantic adventure with crazy Kate, a party of gypsies or a little child on a common, to the drawing room and the ladies again, to the sofa and the tea-kettle—No, I beg his pardon, not to the singing, well-scoured tea-kettle, but to the polished and loud-hissing urn. His walks and arbours are kept clear of worms and snails, with as much an appearance of *petit-maitreship* as of humanity. He has some of the sickly sensibility and pampered refinements of Pope; but then Pope prided himself in them: whereas, Cowper affects to be all simplicity and plainness. He had neither Thomson's love of the unadorned beauties of nature, nor Pope's exquisite sense of the elegances of art. He was, in fact, a nervous man, afraid of trusting himself to the seductions of the one, and ashamed of putting forward his pretensions to an intimacy with the other: but to be a coward, is not the way to succeed either in poetry, in war, or in love! Still he is a genuine poet, and deserves all his reputation. His worst vices are amiable weaknesses, elegant trifling. Though there is a frequent dryness, timidity, and jejuneness in his manner, he has left a number of pictures of domestic comfort and social refinement, as well as of natural imagery and feeling, which can hardly be forgotten but with the language itself. Such, among others, are his memorable description of the post coming in, that of the preparations for tea in a winter's evening in the country, of the unexpected fall of snow, of the frosty morning (with the fine satirical transition to the Empress of Russia's palace of ice), and most of all, the winter's walk at noon. Every one of these may be considered as distinct studies, or highly finished cabinet-pieces, arranged without order or coherence. I shall be excused for giving the last of them, as what has always appeared to me one of the most feeling, elegant, and perfect specimens of this writer's manner.

'The night was winter in his roughest mood;
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue,

Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
Again the harmony comes o'er the vale;
And through the trees I view th' embattled tow'r,
Whence all the music. I again perceive
The soothing influence of the wafted strains,
And settle in soft musings as I tread
The walk, still verdant, under oaks and elms,
Whose outspread branches overarch the glade.
The roof, though moveable through all its length,
As the wind sways it, has yet well suffic'd,
And, intercepting in their silent fall
The frequent flakes, has kept a path for me.
No noise is here, or none that hinders thought.
The redbreast warbles still, but is content
With slender notes, and more than half suppress'd.
Pleas'd with his solitude, and flitting light
From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
From many a twig the pendent drop of ice,
That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below.
Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
Charms more than silence. Meditation here
May think down hours to moments. Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And Learning wiser grow without his books.
Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft-times no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Books are not seldom talismans and spells,
By which the magic art of shrewder wits
Holds an unthinking multitude enthrall'd.
Some to the fascination of a name
Surrender judgment hood-wink'd. Some the style
Infatuates, and through labyrinths and wilds
Of error leads them, by a tune entranc'd,
While sloth seduces more, too weak to bear
The insupportable fatigue of thought,
And swallowing therefore without pause or choice
The total grist unsifted, husks and all.
But trees, and rivulets whose rapid course
Defies the check of winter, haunts of deer,
And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs,
And lanes, in which the primrose ere her time
Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root,
Deceive no student. Wisdom there, and truth,
Not shy, as in the world, and to be won
By slow solicitation, seize at once
The roving thought, and fix it on themselves.'

His satire is also excellent. It is pointed and forcible, with the polished manners of the gentleman, and the honest indignation of the virtuous man. His religious poetry, except where it takes a tincture of controversial heat, wants elevation and fire. His Muse had not a seraph's wing. I might refer, in illustration of this opinion, to the laboured anticipation of the Millennium at the end of the sixth book. He could describe a piece of shell-work as well as any modern poet: but he could not describe the New Jerusalem so well as John Bunyan;—nor are his verses on Alexander Selkirk so good as Robinson Crusoe. The one is not so much like a vision, nor is the other so much like the reality.

The first volume of Cowper's poems has, however, been less read than it deserved. The comparison in these poems of the proud and humble believer to the peacock and the pheasant, and the parallel between Voltaire and the poor cottager, are exquisite pieces of eloquence and poetry, particularly the last.

> 'Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
> Pillow and bobbins all her little store;
> Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
> Shuffling her threads about the live-long day,
> Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night,
> Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;
> She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
> Has little understanding, and no wit,
> Receives no praise; but, though her lot be such,
> (Toilsome and indigent) she renders much;
> Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—
> A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
> And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes
> Her title to a treasure in the skies.
>
> O happy peasant! Oh unhappy bard!
> His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;
> He prais'd, perhaps, for ages yet to come,
> She never heard of half a mile from home:
> He lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
> She safe in the simplicity of hers.'

His character ot Whitfield, in the poem on Hope, is one of his most spirited and striking things. It is written *con amore.*

> 'But if, unblameable in word and thought,
> A man arise, a man whom God has taught,
> With all Elijah's dignity of tone,
> And all the love of the beloved John,
> To storm the citadels they build in air,
> To smite the untemper'd wall ('tis death to spare,)

> To sweep away all refuges of lies,
> And place, instead of quirks, themselves devise,
> Lama Sabachthani before their eyes;
> To show that without Christ all gain is loss,
> All hope despair that stands not on his cross;
> Except a few his God may have impressed,
> A tenfold phrensy seizes all the rest.'

These lines were quoted, soon after their appearance, by the Monthly Reviewers, to shew that Cowper was no poet, though they afterwards took credit to themselves for having been the first to introduce his verses to the notice of the public. It is not a little remarkable that these same critics regularly damned, at its first coming out, every work which has since acquired a standard reputation with the public. —Cowper's verses on his mother's picture, and his lines to Mary, are some of the most pathetic that ever were written. His stanzas on the loss of the Royal George have a masculine strength and feeling beyond what was usual with him. The story of John Gilpin has perhaps given as much pleasure to as many people as any thing of the same length that ever was written.

His life was an unhappy one. It was embittered by a morbid affection, and by his religious sentiments. Nor are we to wonder at this, or bring it as a charge against religion; for it is the nature of the poetical temperament to carry every thing to excess, whether it be love, religion, pleasure, or pain, as we may see in the case of Cowper and of Burns, and to find torment or rapture in that in which others merely find a resource from *ennui*, or a relaxation from common occupation.

There are two poets still living who belong to the same class of excellence, and of whom I shall here say a few words; I mean Crabbe, and Robert Bloomfield, the author of the Farmer's Boy. As a painter of simple natural scenery, and of the still life of the country, few writers have more undeniable and unassuming pretensions than the ingenious and self-taught poet, last-mentioned. Among the sketches of this sort I would mention, as equally distinguished for delicacy, faithfulness, and *naïveté*, his description of lambs racing, of the pigs going out an acorning, of the boy sent to feed his sheep before the break of day in winter; and I might add the innocently told story of the poor bird-boy, who in vain through the live-long day expects his promised companions at his hut, to share his feast of roasted sloes with him, as an example of that humble pathos, in which this author excels. The fault indeed of his genius is that it is too humble: his Muse has something not only rustic, but menial in her aspect. He seems afraid of elevating

nature, lest she should be ashamed of him. Bloomfield very beautifully describes the lambs in springtime as racing round the hillocks of green turf: Thomson, in describing the same image, makes the mound of earth the remains of an old Roman encampment. Bloomfield never gets beyond his own experience; and that is somewhat confined. He gives the simple appearance of nature, but he gives it naked, shivering, and unclothed with the drapery of a moral imagination. His poetry has much the effect of the first approach of spring, 'while yet the year is unconfirmed,' where a few tender buds venture forth here and there, but are chilled by the early frosts and nipping breath of poverty.—It should seem from this and other instances that have occurred within the last century, that we cannot expect from original genius alone, without education, in modern and more artificial periods, the same bold and independent results as in former periods. And one reason appears to be, that though such persons, from whom we might at first expect a restoration of the good old times of poetry, are not encumbered and enfeebled by the trammels of custom, and the dull weight of other men's ideas; yet they are oppressed by the consciousness of a want of the common advantages which others have; are looking at the tinsel finery of the age, while they neglect the rich unexplored mine in their own breasts; and instead of setting an example for the world to follow, spend their lives in aping, or in the despair of aping, the hackneyed accomplishments of their inferiors. Another cause may be, that original genius alone is not sufficient to produce the highest excellence, without a corresponding state of manners, passions, and religious belief: that no single mind can move in direct opposition to the vast machine of the world around it; that the poet can do no more than stamp the mind of his age upon his works; and that all that the ambition of the highest genius can hope to arrive at, after the lapse of one or two generations, is the perfection of that more refined and effeminate style of studied elegance and adventitious ornament, which is the result, not of nature, but of art. In fact, no other style of poetry has succeeded, or seems likely to succeed, in the present day. The public taste hangs like a millstone round the neck of all original genius that does not conform to established and exclusive models. The writer is not only without popular sympathy, but without a rich and varied mass of materials for his mind to work upon and assimilate unconsciously to itself; his attempts at originality are looked upon as affectation, and in the end, degenerate into it from the natural spirit of contradiction, and the constant uneasy sense of disappointment and undeserved ridicule. But to return.

Crabbe is, if not the most natural, the most literal of our descriptive

poets. He exhibits the smallest circumstances of the smallest things. He gives the very costume of meanness; the nonessentials of every trifling incident. He is his own landscape-painter, and engraver too. His pastoral scenes seem pricked on paper in little dotted lines. He describes the interior of a cottage like a person sent there to distrain for rent. He has an eye to the number of arms in an old worm-eaten chair, and takes care to inform himself and the reader whether a joint-stool stands upon three legs or upon four. If a settle by the fire-side stands awry, it gives him as much disturbance as a tottering world; and he records the rent in a ragged counterpane as an event in history. He is equally curious in his back-grounds and in his figures. You know the christian and surnames of every one of his heroes,—the dates of their achievements, whether on a Sunday or a Monday,—their place of birth and burial, the colour of their clothes, and of their hair, and whether they squinted or not. He takes an inventory of the human heart exactly in the same manner as of the furniture of a sick room: his sentiments have very much the air of fixtures; he gives you the petrifaction of a sigh, and carves a tear, to the life, in stone. Almost all his characters are tired of their lives, and you heartily wish them dead. They remind one of anatomical preservations; or may be said to bear the same relation to actual life that a stuffed cat in a glass-case does to the real one purring on the hearth: the skin is the same, but the life and the sense of heat is gone. Crabbe's poetry is like a museum, or curiosity-shop: every thing has the same posthumous appearance, the same inanimateness and identity of character. If Bloomfield is too much of the Farmer's Boy, Crabbe is too much of the parish beadle, an overseer of the country poor. He has no delight beyond the walls of a workhouse, and his officious zeal would convert the world into a vast infirmary. He is a kind of Ordinary, not of Newgate, but of nature. His poetical morality is taken from Burn's Justice, or the Statutes against Vagrants. He sets his own imagination in the stocks, and his Muse, like Malvolio, 'wears cruel garters.' He collects all the petty vices of the human heart, and superintends, as in a panopticon, a select circle of rural malefactors. He makes out the poor to be as bad as the rich—a sort of vermin for the others to hunt down and trample upon, and this he thinks a good piece of work. With him there are but two moral categories, riches and poverty, authority and dependence. His parish apprentice, Richard Monday, and his wealthy baronet, Sir Richard Monday, of Monday-place, are the same individual—the extremes of the same character, and of his whole system. 'The latter end of his Commonwealth does not forget the beginning.' But his parish ethics are the very worst model for a state: any thing more degrading and

helpless cannot well be imagined. He exhibits just the contrary view of human life to that which Gay has done in his Beggar's Opera. In a word, Crabbe is the only poet who has attempted and succeeded in the *still life* of tragedy: who gives the stagnation of hope and fear—the deformity of vice without the temptation—the pain of sympathy without the interest—and who seems to rely, for the delight he is to convey to his reader, on the truth and accuracy with which he describes only what is disagreeable.

The best descriptive poetry is not, after all, to be found in our descriptive poets. There are set descriptions of the flowers, for instance, in Thomson, Cowper, and others; but none equal to those in Milton's Lycidas, and in the Winter's Tale.

We have few good pastorals in the language. Our manners are not Arcadian; our climate is not an eternal spring; our age is not the age of gold. We have no pastoral-writers equal to Theocritus, nor any landscapes like those of Claude Lorraine. The best parts of Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar are two fables, Mother Hubberd's Tale, and the Oak and the Briar; which last is as splendid a piece of oratory as any to be found in the records of the eloquence of the British senate! Browne, who came after Spenser, and Withers, have left some pleasing allegorical poems of this kind. Pope's are as full of senseless finery and trite affectation, as if a peer of the realm were to sit for his picture with a crook and cocked hat on, smiling with an insipid air of no-meaning, between nature and fashion. Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia is a lasting monument of perverted power; where an image of extreme beauty, as that of 'the shepherd boy piping as though he should never be old,' peeps out once in a hundred folio pages, amidst heaps of intricate sophistry and scholastic quaintness. It is not at all like Nicholas Poussin's picture, in which he represents some shepherds wandering out in a morning of the spring, and coming to a tomb with this inscription—'I also was an Arcadian!' Perhaps the best pastoral in the language is that prose-poem, Walton's Complete Angler. That well-known work has a beauty and romantic interest equal to its simplicity, and arising out of it. In the description of a fishing-tackle, you perceive the piety and humanity of the author's mind. It is to be doubted whether Sannazarius's Piscatory Eclogues are equal to the scenes described by Walton on the banks of the river Lea. He gives the feeling of the open air: we walk with him along the dusty road-side, or repose on the banks of the river under a shady tree; and in watching for the finny prey, imbibe what he beautifully calls 'the patience and simplicity of poor honest fishermen.' We accompany them to their inn at night, and partake of their simple, but delicious fare; while Maud, the pretty milk-maid,

at her mother's desire, sings the classical ditties of the poet Marlow; 'Come live with me, and be my love.' Good cheer is not neglected in this work, any more than in Homer, or any other history that sets a proper value on the good things of this life. The prints in the Complete Angler give an additional reality and interest to the scenes it describes. While Tottenham Cross shall stand, and longer, thy work, amiable and happy old man, shall last!—It is in the notes to it that we find that character of 'a fair and happy milkmaid,' by Sir Thomas Overbury, which may vie in beauty and feeling with Chaucer's character of Griselda.

'A fair and happy milk-maid is a country wench that is so far from making herself beautiful by art, that one look of her's is able to put all face-physic out of countenance. She knows a fair look is but a dumb orator to commend virtue, therefore minds it not. All her excellences stand in her so silently, as if they had stolen upon her without her knowledge. The lining of her apparel (which is herself) is far better than outsides of tissue; for though she be not arrayed in the spoil of the silk-worm, she is decked in innocency, a far better wearing. She doth not, with lying long in bed, spoil both her complexion and conditions. Nature hath taught her, too immoderate sleep is rust to the soul: she rises therefore with chanticleer, her dame's cock, and at night makes the lamb her curfew. Her breath is her own, which scents all the year long of June, like a new-made haycock. She makes her hand hard with labour, and her heart soft with pity; and when winter evenings fall early (sitting at her merry wheel) she sings a defiance to the giddy wheel of Fortune. She doth all things with so sweet a grace, it seems ignorance will not suffer her to do ill, being her mind is to do well. She bestows her year's wages at next fair; and in choosing her garments, counts no bravery in the world like decency. The garden and bee-hive are all her physic and chirurgery, and she lives the longer for 't. She dares go alone, and unfold sheep in the night, and fears no manner of ill, because she means none: yet, to say the truth, she is never alone, for she is still accompanied with old songs, honest thoughts, and prayers, but short ones; yet they have their efficacy, in that they are not palled with ensuing idle cogitations. Lastly, her dreams are so chaste, that she dare tell them; only a Friday's dream is all her superstition; that she conceals for fear of anger. Thus lives she; and all her care is she may die in the spring-time, to have store of flowers stuck upon her winding-sheet.'

The love of the country has been sung by poets, and echoed by philosophers; but the first have not attempted, and the last have been greatly puzzled to account for it. I do not know that any one has ever explained, satisfactorily, the true source of this feeling, or of that soothing emotion which the sight of the country, or a lively description of rural objects hardly ever fails to infuse into the mind. Some have ascribed this feeling to the natural beauty of the objects them-

selves; others to the freedom from care, the silence and tranquillity which scenes of retirement afford; others to the healthy and innocent employments of a country life; others to the simplicity of country manners, and others to a variety of different causes; but none to the right one. All these, indeed, have their effect; but there is another principal one which has not been touched upon, or only slightly glanced at. I will not, however, imitate Mr. Horne Tooke, who after enumerating seventeen different definitions of the verb, and laughing at them all as deficient and nugatory, at the end of two quarto volumes does not tell us what the verb really is, and has left posterity to pluck out 'the heart of his mystery.' I will say at once what it is that distinguishes this interest from others, and that is its *abstractedness*. The interest we feel in human nature is exclusive, and confined to the individual; the interest we feel in external nature is common, and transferable from one object to all others of the same class. Thus.

Rousseau in his Confessions relates, that when he took possession of his room at Annecy, he found that he could see 'a little spot of green' from his window, which endeared his situation the more to him, because, he says, it was the first time he had had this object constantly before him since he left Boissy, the place where he was at school when a child.[1] Some such feeling as that here described will be found lurking at the bottom of all our attachments of this sort. Were it not for the recollections habitually associated with them, natural objects could not interest the mind in the manner they do. No doubt, the sky is beautiful, the clouds sail majestically along its bosom; the sun is cheering; there is something exquisitely graceful in the manner in which a plant or tree puts forth its branches; the motion with which they bend and tremble in the evening breeze is soft and lovely; there is music in the babbling of a brook; the view from the top of a mountain is full of grandeur; nor can we behold the ocean with indifference. Or, as the Minstrel sweetly sings,

'Oh, how canst thou renounce the boundless store
  Of charms which Nature to her votary yields!
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
  The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
  And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
  And all the dread magnificence of heaven,
Oh, how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!'

[1] Pope also declares that he had a particular regard for an old post which stood in the court-yard before the house where he was brought up.

It is not, however, the beautiful and magnificent alone that we admire in Nature; the most insignificant and rudest objects are often found connected with the strongest emotions; we become attached to the most common and familiar images, as to the face of a friend whom we have long known, and from whom we have received many benefits. It is because natural objects have been associated with the sports of our childhood, with air and exercise, with our feelings in solitude, when the mind takes the strongest hold of things, and clings with the fondest interest to whatever strikes its attention; with change of place, the pursuit of new scenes, and thoughts of distant friends; it is because they have surrounded us in almost all situations, in joy and in sorrow, in pleasure and in pain; because they have been one chief source and nourishment of our feelings, and a part of our being, that we love them as we do ourselves.

There is, generally speaking, the same foundation for our love of Nature as for all our habitual attachments, namely, association of ideas. But this is not all. That which distinguishes this attachment from others is the transferable nature of our feelings with respect to physical objects; the associations connected with any one object extending to the whole class. Our having been attached to any particular person does not make us feel the same attachment to the next person we may chance to meet; but, if we have once associated strong feelings of delight with the objects of natural scenery, the tie becomes indissoluble, and we shall ever after feel the same attachment to other objects of the same sort. I remember when I was abroad, the trees, and grass, and wet leaves, rustling in the walks of the Thuilleries, seemed to be as much English, to be as much the same trees and grass, that I had always been used to, as the sun shining over my head was the same sun which I saw in England; the faces only were foreign to me. Whence comes this difference? It arises from our always imperceptibly connecting the idea of the individual with man, and only the idea of the class with natural objects. In the one case, the external appearance or physical structure is the least thing to be attended to; in the other, it is every thing. The springs that move the human form, and make it friendly or adverse to me, lie hid within it. There is an infinity of motives, passions, and ideas, contained in that narrow compass, of which I know nothing, and in which I have no share. Each individual is a world to himself, governed by a thousand contradictory and wayward impulses. I can, therefore, make no inference from one individual to another; nor can my habitual sentiments, with respect to any individual, extend beyond himself to others. A crowd of people presents a disjointed, confused, and unsatisfactory appearance to the eye, because there is nothing to

connect the motley assemblage into one continuous or general impression, unless when there is some common object of interest to fix their attention, as in the case of a full pit at the play-house. The same principle will also account for that feeling of littleness, vacuity, and perplexity, which a stranger feels on entering the streets of a populous city. Every individual he meets is a blow to his personal identity. Every new face is a teazing, unanswered riddle. He feels the same wearisome sensation in walking from Oxford Street to Temple Bar, as a person would do who should be compelled to read through the first leaf of all the volumes in a library. But it is otherwise with respect to nature. A flock of sheep is not a contemptible, but a beautiful sight. The greatest number and variety of physical objects do not puzzle the will, or distract the attention, but are massed together under one uniform and harmonious feeling. The heart reposes in greater security on the immensity of Nature's works, 'expatiates freely there,' and finds elbow room and breathing space. We are always at home with Nature. There is neither hypocrisy, caprice, nor mental reservation in her favours. Our intercourse with her is not liable to accident or change, suspicion or disappointment: she smiles on us still the same. A rose is always sweet, a lily is always beautiful: we do not hate the one, nor envy the other. If we have once enjoyed the cool shade of a tree, and been lulled into a deep repose by the sound of a brook running at its foot, we are sure that wherever we can find a shady stream, we can enjoy the same pleasure again; so that when we imagine these objects, we can easily form a mystic personification of the friendly power that inhabits them, Dryad or Naiad, offering its cool fountain or its tempting shade. Hence the origin of the Grecian mythology. All objects of the same kind being the same, not only in their appearance, but in their practical uses, we habitually confound them together under the same general idea; and whatever fondness we may have conceived for one, is immediately placed to the common account. The most opposite kinds and remote trains of feeling gradually go to enrich the same sentiment; and in our love of nature, there is all the force of individual attachment, combined with the most airy abstraction. It is this circumstance which gives that refinement, expansion, and wild interest, to feelings of this sort, when strongly excited, which every one must have experienced who is a true lover of nature.

It is the same setting sun that we see and remember year after year, through summer and winter, seed-time and harvest. The moon that shines above our heads, or plays through the checquered shade, is the same moon that we used to read of in Mrs. Radcliffe's romances. We see no difference in the trees first covered with leaves

in the spring. The dry reeds rustling on the side of a stream—the woods swept by the loud blast—the dark massy foliage of autumn—the grey trunks and naked branches of the trees in winter—the sequestered copse, and wide-extended heath—the glittering sunny showers, and December snows—are still the same, or accompanied with the same thoughts and feelings: there is no object, however trifling or rude, that does not in some mood or other find its way into the heart, as a link in the chain of our living being; and this it is that makes good that saying of the poet—

> 'To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.'

Thus nature is a kind of universal home, and every object it presents to us an old acquaintance with unaltered looks; for there is that consent and mutual harmony among all her works, one undivided spirit pervading them throughout, that to him who has well acquainted himself with them, they speak always the same well-known language, striking on the heart, amidst unquiet thoughts and the tumult of the world, like the music of one's native tongue heard in some far-off country.

> 'My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky:
> So was it when my life began,
> So is it now I am a man,
> So shall it be when I grow old and die.
> The child 's the father of the man,
> And I would have my years to be
> Linked each to each by natural piety.'

The daisy that first strikes the child's eye in trying to leap over his own shadow, is the same flower that with timid upward glance implores the grown man not to tread upon it. Rousseau, in one of his botanical excursions, meeting with the periwinkle, fell upon his knees, crying out—*Ah! voila de la pervenche!* It was because he had thirty years before brought home the same flower with him in one of his rambles with Madame de Warens, near Chambery. It struck him as the same identical little blue flower that he remembered so well; and thirty years of sorrow and bitter regret were effaced from his memory. That, or a thousand other flowers of the same name, were the same to him, to the heart, and to the eye; but there was but one Madame Warens in the world, whose image was never absent from his thoughts; with whom flowers and verdure sprung up beneath his feet, and without whom all was cold and barren in nature and in his own breast. The cuckoo, 'that wandering voice,' that

comes and goes with the spring, mocks our ears with one note from youth to age; and the lapwing, screaming round the traveller's path, repeats for ever the same sad story of Tereus and Philomel!

LECTURE VI

ON SWIFT, YOUNG, GRAY, COLLINS, &C.

I SHALL in the present Lecture go back to the age of Queen Anne, and endeavour to give a cursory account of the most eminent of our poets, of whom I have not already spoken, from that period to the present.

The three principal poets among the wits of Queen Anne's reign, next to Pope, were Prior, Swift, and Gay. Parnell, though a good-natured, easy man, and a friend to poets and the Muses, was himself little more than an occasional versifier; and Arbuthnot, who had as much wit as the best of them, chose to shew it in prose, and not in verse. He had a very notable share in the immortal History of John Bull, and the inimitable and praise-worthy Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus. There has been a great deal said and written about the plagiarisms of Sterne; but the only real plagiarism he has been guilty of (if such theft were a crime), is in taking Tristram Shandy's father from Martin's, the elder Scriblerus. The original idea of the character, that is, of the opinionated, captious old gentleman, who is pedantic, not from profession, but choice, belongs to Arbuthnot.—Arbuthnot's style is distinguished from that of his contemporaries, even by a greater degree of terseness and conciseness. He leaves out every superfluous word; is sparing of connecting particles, and introductory phrases; uses always the simplest forms of construction; and is more a master of the idiomatic peculiarities and internal resources of the language than almost any other writer. There is a research in the choice of a plain, as well as of an ornamented or learned style; and, in fact, a great deal more. Among common English words, there may be ten expressing the same thing with different degrees of force and propriety, and only one of them the very word we want, because it is the only one that answers exactly with the idea we have in our minds. Each word in familiar use has a different set of associations and shades of meaning attached to it, and distinguished from each other by inveterate custom; and it is in having the whole of these at our command, and in knowing which to choose, as they are called for by the occasion, that the perfection of a pure conversational prose-style consists. But in writing a florid and artificial style,

neither the same range of invention, nor the same quick sense of propriety—nothing but learning is required. If you know the words, and their general meaning, it is sufficient: it is impossible you should know the nicer inflections of signification, depending on an endless variety of application, in expressions borrowed from a foreign or dead language. They all impose upon the ear alike, because they are not familiar to it; the only distinction left is between the pompous and the plain; the *sesquipedalia verba* have this advantage, that they are all of one length; and any words are equally fit for a learned style, so that we have never heard them before. Themistocles thought that the same sounding epithets could not suit all subjects, as the same dress does not fit all persons. The style of our modern prose-writers is very fine in itself; but it wants variety of inflection and adaptation; it hinders us from seeing the differences of the things it undertakes to describe.

What I have here insisted on will be found to be the leading distinction between the style of Swift, Arbuthnot, Steele, and the other writers of the age of Queen Anne, and the style of Dr. Johnson, which succeeded to it. The one is English, and the other is not. The writers first mentioned, in order to express their thoughts, looked about them for the properest word to convey any idea, that the language which they spoke, and which their countrymen understood, afforded: Dr. Johnson takes the first English word that offers, and by translating it at a venture into the first Greek or Latin word he can think of, only retaining the English termination, produces an extraordinary effect upon the reader, by much the same sort of mechanical process that Trim converted the old jack-boots into a pair of new mortars.

Dr. Johnson was a lazy learned man, who liked to think and talk, better than to read or write; who, however, wrote much and well, but too often by rote. His long compound Latin phrases required less thought, and took up more room than others. What shews the facilities afforded by this style of imposing generalization, is, that it was instantly adopted with success by all those who were writers by profession, or who were not; and that at present, we cannot see a lottery puff or a quack advertisement pasted against a wall, that is not perfectly Johnsonian in style. Formerly, the learned had the privilege of translating their notions into Latin; and a great privilege it was, as it confined the reputation and emoluments of learning to themselves. Dr. Johnson may be said to have naturalised this privilege, by inventing a sort of jargon translated half-way out of one language into the other, which raised the Doctor's reputation, and confounded all ranks in literature.

In the short period above alluded to, authors professed to write as other men spoke; every body now affects to speak as authors write; and any one who retains the use of his mother tongue, either in writing or conversation, is looked upon as a very illiterate character.

Prior and Gay belong, in the characteristic excellences of their style, to the same class of writers with Suckling, Rochester, and Sedley: the former imbibed most of the licentious levity of the age of Charles II. and carried it on beyond the Revolution under King William. Prior has left no single work equal to Gay's Fables, or the Beggar's Opera. But in his lyrical and fugitive pieces he has shown even more genius, more playfulness, more mischievous gaiety. No one has exceeded him in the laughing grace with which he glances at a subject that will not bear examining, with which he gently hints at what cannot be directly insisted on, with which he half conceals, and half draws aside the veil from some of the Muses' nicest mysteries. His Muse is, in fact, a giddy wanton flirt, who spends her time in playing at snap-dragon and blind-man's buff, who tells what she should not, and knows more than she tells. She laughs at the tricks she shews us, and blushes, or would be thought to do so, at what she keeps concealed. Prior has translated several of Fontaine's Tales from the French; and they have lost nothing in the translation, either of their wit or malice. I need not name them: but the one I like the most, is that of Cupid in search of Venus's doves. No one could insinuate a knavish plot, a tender point, a loose moral, with such unconscious archness, and careless raillery, as if he gained new self-possession and adroitness from the perplexity and confusion into which he throws scrupulous imaginations, and knew how to seize on all the ticklish parts of his subject, from their involuntarily shrinking under his grasp. Some of his imitations of Boileau's servile addresses to Louis XIV. which he has applied with a happy mixture of wit and patriotic enthusiasm to King William, or as he familiarly calls him, to

> 'Little Will, the scourge of France,
> No Godhead, but the first of men,'

are excellent, and shew the same talent for *double-entendre* and the same gallantry of spirit, whether in the softer lyric, or the more lively heroic. Some of Prior's *bon mots* are the best that are recorded.—His serious poetry, as his *Solomon*, is as heavy as his familiar style was light and agreeable. His moral Muse is a Magdalen, and should not have obtruded herself on public view. Henry and Emma is a paraphrase of the old ballad of the Nut-brown Maid, and not so good as the original. In short, as we often see in other cases, where

men thwart their own genius, Prior's sentimental and romantic productions are mere affectation, the result not of powerful impulse or real feeling, but of a consciousness of his deficiencies, and a wish to supply their place by labour and art.

Gay was sometimes grosser than Prior, not systematically, but inadvertently—from not being so well aware of what he was about; nor was there the same necessity for caution, for his grossness is by no means so seductive or inviting.

Gay's Fables are certainly a work of great merit, both as to the quantity of invention implied, and as to the elegance and facility of the execution. They are, however, spun out too long; the descriptions and narrative are too diffuse and desultory; and the moral is sometimes without point. They are more like Tales than Fables. The best are, perhaps, the Hare with Many Friends, the Monkeys, and the Fox at the Point of Death. His Pastorals are pleasing and poetical. But his capital work is his Beggar's Opera. It is indeed a masterpiece of wit and genius, not to say of morality. In composing it, he chose a very unpromising ground to work upon, and he has prided himself in adorning it with all the graces, the precision, and brilliancy of style. It is a vulgar error to call this a vulgar play. So far from it, that I do not scruple to say that it appears to me one of the most refined productions in the language. The elegance of the composition is in exact proportion to the coarseness of the materials: by 'happy alchemy of mind,' the author has extracted an essence of refinement from the dregs of human life, and turns its very dross into gold. The scenes, characters, and incidents are, in themselves, of the lowest and most disgusting kind: but, by the sentiments and reflections which are put into the mouths of highwaymen, turnkeys, their mistresses, wives, or daughters, he has converted this motley group into a set of fine gentlemen and ladies, satirists and philosophers. He has also effected this transformation without once violating probability, or 'o'erstepping the modesty of nature.' In fact, Gay has turned the tables on the critics; and by the assumed licence of the mock-heroic style, has enabled himself to *do justice to nature*, that is, to give all the force, truth, and locality of real feeling to the thoughts and expressions, without being called to the bar of false taste and affected delicacy. The extreme beauty and feeling of the song, 'Woman is like the fair flower in its lustre,' are only equalled by its characteristic propriety and *naïveté*. *Polly* describes her lover going to the gallows, with the same touching simplicity, and with all the natural fondness of a young girl in her circumstances, who sees in his approaching catastrophe nothing but the misfortunes and the personal accomplishments of the object of her affections. 'I see

him sweeter than the nosegay in his hand; the admiring crowd lament that so lovely a youth should come to an untimely end:—even butchers weep, and Jack Ketch refuses his fee rather than consent to tie the fatal knot.' The preservation of the character and costume is complete. It has been said by a great authority—'There is some soul of goodness in things evil':—and the *Beggar's Opera* is a good-natured but instructive comment on this text. The poet has thrown all the gaiety and sunshine of the imagination, all the intoxication of pleasure, and the vanity of despair, round the short-lived existence of his heroes; while *Peachum* and *Lockitt* are seen in the back-ground, parcelling out their months and weeks between them. The general view exhibited of human life is of the most subtle and abstracted kind. The author has, with great felicity, brought out the good qualities and interesting emotions almost inseparable from the lowest conditions; and with the same penetrating glance, has detected the disguises which rank and circumstances lend to exalted vice. Every line in this sterling comedy sparkles with wit, and is fraught with the keenest sarcasm. The very wit, however, takes off from the offensiveness of the satire; and I have seen great statesmen, very great statesmen, heartily enjoying the joke, laughing most immoderately at the compliments paid to them as not much worse than pickpockets and cut-throats in a different line of life, and pleased, as it were, to see themselves humanised by some sort of fellowship with their kind. Indeed, it may be said that the moral of the piece is *to shew the vulgarity of vice*; or that the same violations of integrity and decorum, the same habitual sophistry in palliating their want of principle, are common to the great and powerful, with the meanest and most contemptible of the species. What can be more convincing than the arguments used by these would-be politicians, to shew that in hypocrisy, selfishness, and treachery, they do not come up to many of their betters? The exclamation of *Mrs. Peachum*, when her daughter marries *Macheath*, 'Hussy, hussy, you will be as ill used, and as much neglected, as if you had married a lord,' is worth all Miss Hannah More's laboured invectives on the laxity of the manners of high life!

I shall conclude this account of Gay with his verses on Sir Richard Blackmore, which may serve at once as a specimen of his own manner, and as a character of a voluminous contemporary poet, who was admired by Mr. Locke, and knighted by King William III.

'See who ne'er was nor will be half-read,
Who first sung Arthur, then sung Alfred;
Praised great Eliza in God's anger,
Till all true Englishmen cried, 'Hang her!'—

Maul'd human wit in one thick satire;
Next in three books spoil'd human nature:
Undid Creation at a jerk,
And of Redemption made damn'd work.
Then took his Muse at once, and dipt her
Full in the middle of the Scripture.
What wonders there the man, grown old, did?
Sternhold himself he out Sternholded.
Made David seem so mad and freakish,
All thought him just what thought King Achish.
No mortal read his Solomon
But judg'd Re'boam his own son.
Moses he serv'd as Moses Pharaoh,
And Deborah as she Siserah;
Made Jeremy full sore to cry,
And Job himself curse God and die.
What punishment all this must follow?
Shall Arthur use him like King Tollo?
Shall David as Uriah slay him?
Or dextrous Deborah Siserah him?
No!—none of these! Heaven spare his life!
But send him, honest Job, thy wife!'

Gay's Trivia, or Art of Walking the Streets, is as pleasant as walking the streets must have been at the time when it was written. His ballad of Black Eyed Susan is one of the most delightful that can be imagined; nor do I see that it is a bit the worse for Mr. Jekyll's parody on it.

Swift's reputation as a poet has been in a manner obscured by the greater splendour, by the natural force and inventive genius of his prose writings; but if he had never written either the Tale of a Tub or Gulliver's Travels, his name merely as a poet would have come down to us, and have gone down to posterity with well-earned honours. His Imitations of Horace, and still more his Verses on his own Death, place him in the first rank of agreeable moralists in verse. There is not only a dry humour, an exquisite tone of irony, in these productions of his pen; but there is a touching, unpretending pathos, mixed up with the most whimsical and eccentric strokes of pleasantry and satire. His Description of the Morning in London, and of a City Shower, which were first published in the Tatler, are among the most delightful of the contents of that very delightful work. Swift shone as one of the most sensible of the poets; he is also distinguished as one of the most nonsensical of them. No man has written so many lack-a-daisical, slip-shod, tedious, trifling, foolish, fantastical verses as he, which are so little an imputation on the wisdom of the writer; and which, in fact, only shew his readiness

to oblige others, and to forget himself. He has gone so far as to invent a new stanza of fourteen and sixteen syllable lines for Mary the cookmaid to vent her budget of nothings, and for Mrs. Harris to gossip with the deaf old housekeeper. Oh, when shall we have such another Rector of Laracor!—The Tale of a Tub is one of the most masterly compositions in the language, whether for thought, wit, or style. It is so capital and undeniable a proof of the author's talents, that Dr. Johnson, who did not like Swift, would not allow that he wrote it. It is hard that the same performance should stand in the way of a man's promotion to a bishopric, as wanting gravity, and at the same time be denied to be his, as having too much wit. It is a pity the Doctor did not find out some graver author, for whom he felt a critical kindness, on whom to father this splendid but unacknowledged production. Dr. Johnson could not deny that Gulliver's Travels were his; he therefore disputed their merits, and said that after the first idea of them was conceived, they were easy to execute; all the rest followed mechanically. I do not know how that may be; but the mechanism employed is something very different from any that the author of Rasselas was in the habit of bringing to bear on such occasions. There is nothing more futile, as well as invidious, than this mode of criticising a work of original genius. Its greatest merit is supposed to be in the invention; and you say, very wisely, that it is not *in the execution*. You might as well take away the merit of the invention of the telescope, by saying that, after its uses were explained and understood, any ordinary eyesight could look through it. Whether the excellence of Gulliver's Travels is in the conception or the execution, is of little consequence; the power is somewhere, and it is a power that has moved the world. The power is not that of big words and vaunting common places. Swift left these to those who wanted them; and has done what his acuteness and intensity of mind alone could enable any one to conceive or to perform. His object was to strip empty pride and grandeur of the imposing air which external circumstances throw around them; and for this purpose he has cheated the imagination of the illusions which the prejudices of sense and of the world put upon it, by reducing every thing to the abstract predicament of size. He enlarges or diminishes the scale, as he wishes to shew the insignificance or the grossness of our over-weening self-love. That he has done this with mathematical precision, with complete presence of mind and perfect keeping, in a manner that comes equally home to the understanding of the man and of the child, does not take away from the merit of the work or the genius of the author. He has taken a new view of human nature, such as a being of a higher sphere might take of it; he has torn the scales from off

his moral vision; he has tried an experiment upon human life, and sifted its pretensions from the alloy of circumstances; he has measured it with a rule, has weighed it in a balance, and found it, for the most part, wanting and worthless—in substance and in shew. Nothing solid, nothing valuable is left in his system but virtue and wisdom. What a libel is this upon mankind! What a convincing proof of misanthropy! What presumption and what *malice prepense*, to shew men what they are, and to teach them what they ought to be! What a mortifying stroke aimed at national glory, is that unlucky incident of Gulliver's wading across the channel and carrying off the whole fleet of Blefuscu! After that, we have only to consider which of the contending parties was in the right. What a shock to personal vanity is given in the account of Gulliver's nurse Glumdalclitch! Still, notwithstanding the disparagement to her personal charms, her good-nature remains the same amiable quality as before. I cannot see the harm, the misanthropy, the immoral and degrading tendency of this. The moral lesson is as fine as the intellectual exhibition is amusing. It is an attempt to tear off the mask of imposture from the world; and nothing but imposture has a right to complain of it. It is, indeed, the way with our quacks in morality to preach up the dignity of human nature, to pamper pride and hypocrisy with the idle mockeries of the virtues they pretend to, and which they have not: but it was not Swift's way to cant morality, or any thing else; nor did his genius prompt him to write unmeaning panegyrics on mankind!

I do not, therefore, agree with the estimate of Swift's moral or intellectual character, given by an eminent critic, who does not seem to have forgotten the party politics of Swift. I do not carry my political resentments so far back: I can at this time of day forgive Swift for having been a Tory. I feel little disturbance (whatever I might think of them) at his political sentiments, which died with him, considering how much else he has left behind him of a more solid and imperishable nature! If he had, indeed, (like some others) merely left behind him the lasting infamy of a destroyer of his country, or the shining example of an apostate from liberty, I might have thought the case altered.

The determination with which Swift persisted in a preconcerted theory, savoured of the morbid affection of which he died. There is nothing more likely to drive a man mad, than the being unable to get rid of the idea of the distinction between right and wrong, and an obstinate, constitutional preference of the true to the agreeable. Swift was not a Frenchman. In this respect he differed from Rabelais and Voltaire. They have been accounted the three greatest wits in modern times; but their wit was of a peculiar kind in each. They

are little beholden to each other; there is some resemblance between Lord Peter in the Tale of a Tub, and Rabelais' Friar John; but in general they are all three authors of a substantive character in themselves. Swift's wit (particularly in his chief prose works) was serious, saturnine, and practical; Rabelais' was fantastical and joyous; Voltaire's was light, sportive, and verbal. Swift's wit was the wit of sense; Rabelais', the wit of nonsense; Voltaire's, of indifference to both. The ludicrous in Swift arises out of his keen sense of impropriety, his soreness and impatience of the least absurdity. He separates, with a severe and caustic air, truth from falsehood, folly from wisdom, 'shews vice her own image, scorn her own feature'; and it is the force, the precision, and the honest abruptness with which the separation is made, that excites our surprise, our admiration, and laughter. He sets a mark of reprobation on that which offends good sense and good manners, which cannot be mistaken, and which holds it up to our ridicule and contempt ever after. His occasional disposition to trifling (already noticed) was a relaxation from the excessive earnestness of his mind. *Indignatio facit versus.* His better genius was his spleen. It was the biting acrimony of his temper that sharpened his other faculties. The truth of his perceptions produced the pointed coruscations of his wit; his playful irony was the result of inward bitterness of thought; his imagination was the product of the literal, dry, incorrigible tenaciousness of his understanding. He endeavoured to escape from the persecution of realities into the regions of fancy, and invented his Lilliputians and Brobdingnagians, Yahoos, and Houynhyms, as a diversion to the more painful knowledge of the world around him: *they* only made him laugh, while men and women made him angry. His feverish impatience made him view the infirmities of that great baby the world, with the same scrutinizing glance and jealous irritability that a parent regards the failings of its offspring; but, as Rousseau has well observed, parents have not on this account been supposed to have more affection for other people's children than their own. In other respects, and except from the sparkling effervescence of his gall, Swift's brain was as 'dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage.' He hated absurdity—Rabelais loved it, exaggerated it with supreme satisfaction, luxuriated in its endless varieties, rioted in nonsense, 'reigned there and revelled.' He dwelt on the absurd and ludicrous for the pleasure they gave him, not for the pain. He lived upon laughter, and died laughing. He indulged his vein, and took his full swing of folly. He did not baulk his fancy or his readers. His wit was to him 'as riches fineless'; he saw no end of his wealth in that way, and set no limits to his extravagance: he was communicative, prodigal, boundless, and

inexhaustible. His were the Saturnalia of wit, the riches and the royalty, the health and long life. He is intoxicated with gaiety, mad with folly. His animal spirits drown him in a flood of mirth: his blood courses up and down his veins like wine. His thirst of enjoyment is as great as his thirst of drink: his appetite for good things of all sorts is unsatisfied, and there is a never-ending supply. *Discourse is dry;* so they moisten their words in their cups, and relish their dry jests with plenty of Botargos and dried neats' tongues. It is like Camacho's wedding in Don Quixote, where Sancho ladled out whole pullets and fat geese from the soup-kettles at a pull. The flagons are set a running, their tongues wag at the same time, and their mirth flows as a river. How Friar John roars and lays about him in the vineyard! How Panurge whines in the storm, and how dexterously he contrives to throw the sheep overboard! How much Pantagruel behaves like a wise king! How Gargantua mewls, and pules, and slabbers his nurse, and demeans himself most like a royal infant! what provinces he devours! what seas he drinks up! How he eats, drinks, and sleeps—sleeps, eats, and drinks! The style of Rabelais is no less prodigious than his matter. His words are of marrow, unctuous, dropping fatness. He was a mad wag, the king of good fellows, and prince of practical philosophers!

Rabelais was a Frenchman of the old school—Voltaire of the new. The wit of the one arose from an exuberance of enjoyment—of the other, from an excess of indifference, real or assumed. Voltaire had no enthusiasm for one thing or another: he made light of every thing. In his hands all things turn to chaff and dross, as the pieces of silver money in the Arabian Nights were changed by the hands of the enchanter into little dry crumbling leaves! He is a Parisian. He never exaggerates, is never violent: he treats things with the most provoking *sang froid*; and expresses his contempt by the most indirect hints, and in the fewest words, as if he hardly thought them worth even his contempt. He retains complete possession of himself and of his subject. He does not effect his purpose by the eagerness of his blows, but by the delicacy of his tact. The poisoned wound he inflicted was so fine, as scarcely to be felt till it rankled and festered in its 'mortal consequences.' His callousness was an excellent foil for the antagonists he had mostly to deal with. He took knaves and fools on his shield well. He stole away its cloak from grave imposture. If he reduced other things below their true value, making them seem worthless and hollow, he did not degrade the pretensions of tyranny and superstition below their true value, by making them seem utterly worthless and hollow, as contemptible as they were odious. This was the service he rendered to truth and mankind!

His *Candide* is a masterpiece of wit. It has been called 'the dull product of a scoffer's pen'; it is indeed the 'product of a scoffer's pen'; but after reading the Excursion, few people will think it *dull*. It is in the most perfect keeping, and without any appearance of effort. Every sentence tells, and the whole reads like one sentence. There is something sublime in Martin's sceptical indifference to moral good and evil. It is the repose of the grave. It is better to suffer this living death, than a living martyrdom. 'Nothing can touch him further.' The moral of Candide (such as it is) is the same as that of Rasselas: the execution is different. Voltaire says, 'A great book is a great evil.' Dr. Johnson would have laboured this short apophthegm into a voluminous common-place. Voltaire's traveller (in another work) being asked 'whether he likes black or white mutton best,' replies that 'he is indifferent, provided it is tender.' Dr. Johnson did not get at a conclusion by so short a way as this. If Voltaire's licentiousness is objected to me, I say, let it be placed to its true account, the manners of the age and court in which he lived. The lords and ladies of the bedchamber in the reign of Louis xv. found no fault with the immoral tendency of his writings. Why then should our modern *purists* quarrel with them?—But to return.

Young is a gloomy epigrammatist. He has abused great powers both of thought and language. His moral reflections are sometimes excellent; but he spoils their beauty by overloading them with a religious horror, and at the same time giving them all the smart turns and quaint expression of an enigma or repartee in verse. The well-known lines on Procrastination are in his best manner:

> 'Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer;
> Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
> Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life.
> Procrastination is the thief of time;
> Year after year it steals, till all are fled,
> And to the mercies of a moment leaves
> The vast concerns of an eternal scene.
>
> Of man's miraculous mistakes, this bears
> The palm, "That all men are about to live,"
> For ever on the brink of being born.
> All pay themselves the compliment to think
> They, one day, shall not drivel; and their pride
> On this reversion takes up ready praise;
> At least, their own; their future selves applauds;
> How excellent that life they ne'er will lead!
> Time lodg'd in their own hands is Folly's vails:
> That lodg'd in Fate's, to Wisdom they consign;
> The thing they can't but purpose, they postpone.

'Tis not in Folly, not to scorn a fool;
And scarce in human Wisdom to do more.
All Promise is poor dilatory man,
And that through every stage. When young, indeed,
In full content we, sometimes, nobly rest,
Un-anxious for ourselves; and only wish,
As duteous sons, our fathers were more wise.
At thirty man suspects himself a fool;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;
At fifty chides his infamous delay,
Pushes his prudent purpose to Resolve;
In all the magnanimity of thought
Resolves, and re-resolves; then dies the same.

And why? Because he thinks himself immortal.
All men think all men mortal, but themselves;
Themselves, when some alarming shock of fate
Strikes through their wounded hearts the sudden dread;
But their hearts wounded, like the wounded air,
Soon close; where past the shaft, no trace is found.
As from the wing no scar the sky retains;
The parted wave no furrow from the keel;
So dies in human hearts the thought of death.
Ev'n with the tender tear which nature sheds
O'er those we love, we drop it in their grave.'

His Universal Passion is a keen and powerful satire; but the effort takes from the effect, and oppresses attention by perpetual and violent demands upon it. His tragedy of the Revenge is monkish and scholastic. Zanga is a vulgar caricature of Iago. The finest lines in it are the burst of triumph at the end, when his revenge is completed:

'Let Europe and her pallid sons go weep,
Let Afric on her hundred thrones rejoice,' &c.

Collins is a writer of a very different stamp, who had perhaps less general power of mind than Young; but he had that true *vivida vis*, that genuine inspiration, which alone can give birth to the highest efforts of poetry. He leaves stings in the minds of his readers, certain traces of thought and feelings which never wear out, because nature had left them in his own mind. He is the only one of the minor poets of whom, if he had lived, it cannot be said that he might not have done the greatest things. The germ is there. He is sometimes affected, unmeaning, and obscure; but he also catches rich glimpses of the bowers of Paradise, and has lofty aspirations after the highest seats of the Muses. With a great deal of tinsel and splendid patch-work, he has not been able to hide the solid sterling

ore of genius. In his best works there is an attic simplicity, a pathos, and fervour of imagination, which make us the more lament that the efforts of his mind were at first depressed by neglect and pecuniary embarrassment, and at length buried in the gloom of an unconquerable and fatal malady. How many poets have gone through all the horrors of poverty and contempt, and ended their days in moping melancholy or moody madness!

> 'We poets in our youth begin in gladness,
> But thereof comes in the end despondency and madness.'

Is this the fault of themselves, of nature in tempering them of too fine a clay, or of the world, that spurner of living, and patron of dead merit? Read the account of Collins—with hopes frustrated, with faculties blighted, at last, when it was too late for himself or others, receiving the deceitful favours of relenting Fortune, which served only to throw their sunshine on his decay, and to light him to an early grave. He was found sitting with every spark of imagination extinguished, and with only the faint traces of memory and reason left—with only one book in his room, the Bible; 'but that,' he said, 'was the best.' A melancholy damp hung like an unwholesome mildew upon his faculties—a canker had consumed the flower of his life. He produced works of genius, and the public regarded them with scorn: he aimed at excellence that should be his own, and his friends treated his efforts as the wanderings of fatuity. The proofs of his capacity are, his Ode on Evening, his Ode on the Passions (particularly the fine personification of Hope), his Ode to Fear, the Dirge in Cymbeline, the Lines on Thomson's Grave, and his Eclogues, parts of which are admirable. But perhaps his Ode on the Poetical Character is the best of all. A rich distilled perfume emanates from it like the breath of genius; a golden cloud envelopes it; a honeyed paste of poetic diction encrusts it, like the candied coat of the auricula. His Ode to Evening shews equal genius in the images and versification. The sounds steal slowly over the ear, like the gradual coming on of evening itself:

> 'If aught of oaten stop or pastoral song
> May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
> Like thy own solemn springs,
> Thy springs and dying gales,
>
> O nymph reserv'd, while now the bright-haired sun
> Sits on yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts
> With brede ethereal wove,
> O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-ey'd bat,
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum.
Now teach me, maid compos'd,
To breathe some soften'd strain,

Whose numbers stealing through thy darkling vale
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As musing slow, I hail
Thy genial, lov'd return!

For when thy folding star arising shews
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours and Elves
Who slept in flow'rs the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with sedge,
And sheds the fresh'ning dew, and lovelier still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet
Prepare thy shadowy car;

Then lead, calm Votress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallow'd pile,
Or upland fallows grey
Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blust'ring winds, or driving rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side
Views wilds and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim discover'd spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his show'rs, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves;
Or Winter yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes;

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipp'd Health,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favourite name.'

Hammond, whose poems are bound up with Collins's, in Bell's pocket edition, was a young gentleman, who appears to have fallen in love about the year 1740, and who translated Tibullus into English verse, to let his mistress and the public know of it.

I should conceive that Collins had a much greater poetical genius than Gray: he had more of that fine madness which is inseparable from it, of its turbid effervescence, of all that pushes it to the verge of agony or rapture. Gray's Pindaric Odes are, I believe, generally given up at present: they are stately and pedantic, a kind of methodical borrowed phrenzy. But I cannot so easily give up, nor will the world be in any haste to part with his Elegy in a Country Church-yard: it is one of the most classical productions that ever was penned by a refined and thoughtful mind, moralising on human life. Mr. Coleridge (in his Literary Life) says, that his friend Mr. Wordsworth had undertaken to shew that the language of the Elegy is unintelligible: it has, however, been understood! The Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College is more mechanical and common-place; but it touches on certain strings about the heart, that vibrate in unison with it to our latest breath. No one ever passes by Windsor's 'stately heights,' or sees the distant spires of Eton College below, without thinking of Gray. He deserves that we should think of him; for he thought of others, and turned a trembling, ever-watchful ear to 'the still sad music of humanity.'—His Letters are inimitably fine. If his poems are sometimes finical and pedantic, his prose is quite free from affectation. He pours his thoughts out upon paper as they arise in his mind; and they arise in his mind without pretence, or constraint, from the pure impulse of learned leisure and contemplative indolence. He is not here on stilts or in buckram; but smiles in his easy chair, as he moralises through the loopholes of retreat, on the bustle and raree-show of the world, or on 'those reverend bedlams, colleges and schools!' He had nothing to do but to read and to think, and to tell his friends what he read and thought. His life was a luxurious, thoughtful dream. 'Be mine,' he says in one of his Letters, 'to read eternal new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon.' And in another, to shew his contempt for action and the turmoils of ambition, he says to some one, 'Don't you remember Lords—— and——, who are now great statesmen, little dirty boys playing at cricket? For my part, I do not feel a bit wiser, or bigger, or older than I did then.' What an equivalent for not being wise or great, to be always young! What a happiness never to lose or gain any thing in the game of human life, by being never any thing more than a looker-on!

How different from Shenstone, who only wanted to be looked at:

who withdrew from the world to be followed by the crowd, and courted popularity by affecting privacy! His Letters shew him to have lived in a continual fever of petty vanity, and to have been a finished literary coquet. He seems always to say, 'You will find nothing in the world so amiable as Nature and me: come, and admire us.' His poems are indifferent and tasteless, except his Pastoral Ballad, his Lines on Jemmy Dawson, and his School-mistress, which last is a perfect piece of writing.

Akenside had in him the materials of poetry, but he was hardly a great poet. He improved his Pleasures of the Imagination in the subsequent editions, by pruning away a great many redundances of style and ornament. Armstrong is better, though he has not chosen a very exhilarating subject—The Art of Preserving Health. Churchill's Satires on the Scotch, and Characters of the Players, are as good as the subjects deserved—they are strong, coarse, and full of an air of hardened assurance. I ought not to pass over without mention Green's Poem on the Spleen, or Dyer's Grongar Hill.

The principal name of the period we are now come to is that of Goldsmith, than which few names stand higher or fairer in the annals of modern literature. One should have his own pen to describe him as he ought to be described—amiable, various, and bland, with careless inimitable grace touching on every kind of excellence—with manners unstudied, but a gentle heart—performing miracles of skill from pure happiness of nature, and whose greatest fault was ignorance of his own worth. As a poet, he is the most flowing and elegant of our versifiers since Pope, with traits of artless nature which Pope had not, and with a peculiar felicity in his turns upon words, which he constantly repeated with delightful effect: such as—

> '—— His lot, though small,
> He sees that little lot, the lot of all.'
> * * * * *
> 'And turn'd and look'd, and turn'd to look again.

As a novelist, his Vicar of Wakefield has charmed all Europe. What reader is there in the civilised world, who is not the better for the story of the washes which the worthy Dr. Primrose demolished so deliberately with the poker—for the knowledge of the guinea which the Miss Primroses kept unchanged in their pockets—the adventure of the picture of the Vicar's family, which could not be got into the house—and that of the Flamborough family, all painted with oranges in their hands—or for the story of the case of shagreen spectacles and the cosmogony?

As a comic writer, his Tony Lumpkin draws forth new powers from Mr. Liston's face. That alone is praise enough for it. Poor Goldsmith! how happy he has made others! how unhappy he was in himself! He never had the pleasure of reading his own works! He had only the satisfaction of good-naturedly relieving the necessities of others, and the consolation of being harassed to death with his own! He is the most amusing and interesting person, in one of the most amusing and interesting books in the world, Boswell's Life of Johnson. His peach-coloured coat shall always bloom in Boswell's writings, and his fame survive in his own!—His genius was a mixture of originality and imitation: he could do nothing without some model before him, and he could copy nothing that he did not adorn with the graces of his own mind. Almost all the latter part of the Vicar of Wakefield, and a great deal of the former, is taken from Joseph Andrews; but the circumstances I have mentioned above are not.

The finest things he has left behind him in verse are his character of a country school-master, and that prophetic description of Burke in the Retaliation. His moral Essays in the Citizen of the World, are as agreeable chit-chat as can be conveyed in the form of didactic discourses.

Warton was a poet and a scholar, studious with ease, learned without affectation. He had a happiness which some have been prouder of than he, who deserved it less—he was poet-laureat.

> 'And that green wreath which decks the bard when dead,
> That laurel garland crown'd his living head.'

But he bore his honours meekly, and performed his half-yearly task regularly. I should not have mentioned him for this distinction alone (the highest which a poet can receive from the state), but for another circumstance; I mean his being the author of some of the finest sonnets in the language—at least so they appear to me; and as this species of composition has the necessary advantage of being short (though it is also sometimes both 'tedious and brief'), I will here repeat two or three of them, as treating pleasing subjects in a pleasing and philosophical way.

Written in a blank leaf of Dugdale's Monasticon

> 'Deem not, devoid of elegance, the sage,
> By Fancy's genuine feelings unbeguil'd,
> Of painful pedantry the poring child;
> Who turns of these proud domes the historic page,

Now sunk by Time, and Henry's fiercer rage.
Think'st thou the warbling Muses never smil'd
On his lone hours? Ingenuous views engage
His thoughts, on themes unclassic falsely styl'd,
Intent. While cloister'd piety displays
Her mouldering roll, the piercing eye explores
New manners, and the pomp of elder days,
Whence culls the pensive bard his pictur'd stores.
Not rough nor barren are the winding ways
Of hoar Antiquity, but strewn with flowers.'

Sonnet. Written at Stonehenge.

'Thou noblest monument of Albion's isle,
Whether, by Merlin's aid, from Scythia's shore
To Amber's fatal plain Pendragon bore,
Huge frame of giant hands, the mighty pile,
T' entomb his Britons slain by Hengist's guile:
Or Druid priests, sprinkled with human gore,
Taught mid thy massy maze their mystic lore:
Or Danish chiefs, enrich'd with savage spoil,
To victory's idol vast, an unhewn shrine,
Rear'd the rude heap, or in thy hallow'd ground
Repose the kings of Brutus' genuine line;
Or here those kings in solemn state were crown'd;
Studious to trace thy wondrous origin,
We muse on many an ancient tale renown'd.'

Nothing can be more admirable than the learning here displayed, or the inference from it, that it is of no use but as it leads to interesting thought and reflection.

That written after seeing Wilton House is in the same style, but I prefer concluding with that to the river Lodon, which has a personal as well as poetical interest about it.

'Ah! what a weary race my feet have run,
Since first I trod thy banks with alders crown'd,
And thought my way was all through fairy ground,
Beneath the azure sky and golden sun:
When first my Muse to lisp her notes begun!
While pensive memory traces back the round
Which fills the varied interval between;
Much pleasure, more of sorrow, marks the scene.—
Sweet native stream! those skies and suns so pure
No more return, to cheer my evening road!
Yet still one joy remains, that not obscure
Nor useless, all my vacant days have flow'd
From youth's gay dawn to manhood's prime mature,
Nor with the Muse's laurel unbestow'd.'

I have thus gone through all the names of this period I could think of, but I find that there are others still waiting behind that I had never thought of. Here is a list of some of them—Pattison, Tickell, Hill, Somerville, Browne, Pitt, Wilkie, Dodsley, Shaw, Smart, Langhorne, Bruce, Greame, Glover, Lovibond, Penrose, Mickle, Jago, Scott, Whitehead, Jenyns, Logan, Cotton, Cunningham, and Blacklock.—I think it will be best to let them pass and say nothing about them. It will be hard to persuade so many respectable persons that they are dull writers, and if we give them any praise, they will send others.

But here comes one whose claims cannot be so easily set aside: they have been sanctioned by learning, hailed by genius, and hallowed by misfortune—I mean Chatterton. Yet I must say what I think of him, and that is not what is generally thought. I pass over the disputes between the learned antiquaries, Dr. Mills, Herbert Croft, and Dr. Knox, whether he was to be placed after Shakspeare and Dryden, or to come after Shakspeare alone. A living poet has borne a better testimony to him—

> 'I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy,
> The sleepless soul that perished in his pride;
> And him [1] who walked in glory and in joy
> Beside his plough along the mountain side.'

I am loth to put asunder whom so great an authority has joined together; but I cannot find in Chatterton's works any thing so extraordinary as the age at which they were written. They have a facility, vigour, and knowledge, which were prodigious in a boy of sixteen, but which would not have been so in a man of twenty. He did not shew extraordinary powers of genius, but extraordinary precocity. Nor do I believe he would have written better, had he lived. He knew this himself, or he would have lived. Great geniuses, like great kings, have too much to think of to kill themselves; for their mind to them also 'a kingdom is.' With an unaccountable power coming over him at an unusual age, and with the youthful confidence it inspired, he performed wonders, and was willing to set a seal on his reputation by a tragic catastrophe. He had done his best; and, like another Empedocles, threw himself into Ætna, to ensure immortality. The brazen slippers alone remain!—

[1] Burns.—These lines are taken from the introduction to Mr. Wordsworth's poem of the LEECH-GATHERER.

LECTURE VII

ON BURNS, AND THE OLD ENGLISH BALLADS

I AM sorry that what I said in the conclusion of the last Lecture respecting Chatterton, should have given dissatisfaction to some persons, with whom I would willingly agree on all such matters. What I meant was less to call in question Chatterton's genius, than to object to the common mode of estimating its magnitude by its prematureness. The lists of fame are not filled with the dates of births or deaths; and the side-mark of the age at which they were done, wears out in works destined for immortality. Had Chatterton really done more, we should have thought less of him, for our attention would then have been fixed on the excellence of the works themselves, instead of the singularity of the circumstances in which they were produced. But because he attained to the full powers of manhood at an early age, I do not see that he would have attained to more than those powers, had he lived to be a man. He was a prodigy, because in him the ordinary march of nature was violently precipitated; and it is therefore inferred, that he would have continued to hold on his course, 'unslacked of motion.' On the contrary, who knows but he might have lived to be poet-laureat? It is much better to let him remain as he was. Of his actual productions, any one may think as highly as he pleases; I would only guard against adding to the account of his *quantum meruit*, those possible productions by which the learned rhapodists of his time raised his gigantic pretensions to an equality with those of Homer and Shakspeare. It is amusing to read some of these exaggerated descriptions, each rising above the other in extravagance. In Anderson's Life, we find that Mr. Warton speaks of him 'as a prodigy of genius,' as 'a singular instance of prematurity of abilities': that may be true enough, and Warton was at any rate a competent judge; but Mr. Malone 'believes him to have been the greatest genius that England has produced since the days of Shakspeare.' Dr. Gregory says, 'he must rank, as a universal genius, above Dryden, and perhaps only second to Shakspeare.' Mr. Herbert Croft is still more unqualified in his praises; he asserts, that 'no such being, at any period of life, has ever been known, or possibly ever will be known.' He runs a parallel between Chatterton and Milton; and asserts, that 'an army of Macedonian and Swedish mad butchers fly before him,'

meaning, I suppose, that Alexander the Great and Charles the Twelfth were nothing to him; 'nor,' he adds, 'does my memory supply me with any human being, who at such an age, with such advantages, has produced such compositions. Under the heathen mythology, superstition and admiration would have explained all, by bringing Apollo on earth; nor would the God ever have descended with more credit to himself.'—Chatterton's physiognomy would at least have enabled him to pass *incognito*. It is quite different from the look of timid wonder and delight with which Annibal Caracci has painted a young Apollo listening to the first sounds he draws from a Pan's pipe, under the tutelage of the old Silenus! If Mr. Croft is sublime on the occasion, Dr. Knox is no less pathetic. 'The testimony of Dr. Knox,' says Dr. Anderson, (Essays, p. 144), 'does equal credit to the classical taste and amiable benevolence of the writer, and the genius and reputation of Chatterton.' 'When I read,' says the Doctor, 'the researches of those learned antiquaries who have endeavoured to prove that the poems attributed to Rowley were really written by him, I observe many ingenious remarks in confirmation of their opinion, which it would be tedious, if not difficult, to controvert.'

Now this is so far from the mark, that the whole controversy might have been settled by any one but the learned antiquaries themselves, who had the smallest share of their learning, from this single circumstance, that the poems read as smooth as any modern poems, if you read them as modern compositions; and that you cannot read them, or make verse of them at all, if you pronounce or accent the words as they were spoken at the time when the poems were pretended to have been written. The whole secret of the imposture, which nothing but a deal of learned dust, raised by collecting and removing a great deal of learned rubbish, could have prevented our laborious critics from seeing through, lies on the face of it (to say nothing of the burlesque air which is scarcely disguised throughout) in the repetition of a few obsolete words, and in the mis-spelling of common ones.

'No sooner,' proceeds the Doctor, 'do I turn to the poems, than the labour of the antiquaries appears only waste of time; and I am involuntarily forced to join in placing that laurel, which he seems so well to have deserved, on the brow of Chatterton. The poems bear so many marks of superior genius, that they have deservedly excited the general attention of polite scholars, and are considered as the most remarkable productions in modern poetry. We have many instances of poetical eminence at an early age; but neither Cowley, Milton, nor Pope, ever produced any thing while they were boys,

which can justly be compared to the poems of Chatterton. The learned antiquaries do not indeed dispute their excellence. They extol it in the highest terms of applause. They raise their favourite Rowley to a rivalry with Homer : but they make the very merits of the works an argument against their real author. Is it possible, say they, that a boy should produce compositions so beautiful and masterly ? That a common boy should produce them is not possible,' rejoins the Doctor ; 'but that they should be produced by a boy of an extraordinary genius, such as was that of Homer or Shakspeare, though a prodigy, is such a one as by no means exceeds the bounds of rational credibility.'

Now it does not appear that Shakspeare or Homer were such early prodigies ; so that by this reasoning he must take precedence of them too, as well as of Milton, Cowley, and Pope. The reverend and classical writer then breaks out into the following melancholy raptures:—

'Unfortunate boy ! short and evil were thy days, but thy fame shall be immortal. Hadst thou been known to the munificent patrons of genius. . . .

'Unfortunate boy ! poorly wast thou accommodated during thy short sojourning here among us ;—rudely wast thou treated—sorely did thy feelings suffer from the scorn of the unworthy ; and there are at last those who wish to rob thee of thy only meed, thy posthumous glory. Severe too are the censures of thy morals. In the gloomy moments of despondency, I fear thou hast uttered impious and blasphemous thoughts. But let thy more rigid censors reflect, that thou wast literally and strictly but a boy. Let many of thy bitterest enemies reflect what were their own religious principles, and whether they had any at the age of fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen. Surely it is a severe and unjust surmise that thou wouldst probably have ended thy life as a victim to the laws, if thou hadst not ended it as thou didst.'

Enough, enough, of the learned antiquaries, and of the classical and benevolent testimony of Dr. Knox. Chatterton was, indeed, badly enough off ; but he was at least saved from the pain and shame of reading this woful lamentation over fallen genius, which circulates splendidly bound in the fourteenth edition, while he is a prey to worms. As to those who are really capable of admiring Chatterton's genius, or of feeling an interest in his fate, I would only say, that I never heard any one speak of any one of his works as if it were an old well-known favourite, and had become a faith and a religion in his mind. It is his name, his youth, and what he might have lived to have done, that excite our wonder and admiration. He has the same

sort of posthumous fame that an actor of the last age has—an abstracted reputation which is independent of any thing we know of his works. The admirers of Collins never think of him without recalling to their minds his Ode on Evening, or on the Poetical Character. Gray's Elegy, and his poetical popularity, are identified together, and inseparable even in imagination. It is the same with respect to Burns: when you speak of him as a poet, you mean his works, his Tam o' Shanter, or his Cotter's Saturday Night. But the enthusiasts for Chatterton, if you ask for the proofs of his extraordinary genius, are obliged to turn to the volume, and perhaps find there what they seek; but it is not in their minds; and it is of *that* I spoke.

The Minstrel's song in Ælla is I think the best.

'O! synge untoe my roundelaie,
O! droppe the brynie teare wythe mee,
Daunce ne moe atte hallie daie,
Lycke a rennynge ryver bee.
    Mie love ys dedde,
    Gonne to hys deathe-bedde,
    Al under the wyllowe-tree.

Black hys cryne as the wyntere nyght,
Whyte hys rode as the sommer snowe,
Rodde hys face as the mornynge lyghte,
Cale he lyes ynne the grave belowe.
    Mie love ys dedde,
    Gonne to hys deathe-bedde,
    Al under the wyllowe-tree.

Swote hys tongue as the throstles note,
Quycke ynne daunce as thought cann bee,
Defte his taboure, codgelle stote,
O! hee lys bie the wyllowe-tree.
    Mie love ys dedde,
    Gonne to hys deathe-bedde,
    Al under the wyllowe-tree.

Harke! the ravenne flappes hys wynge,
In the briered dell belowe;
Harke! the dethe-owle loude dothe synge,
To the nygthe-mares as theie goe.
    Mie love ys dedde,
    Gone to hys deathe-bedde,
    Al under the wyllowe-tree.

See! the whyte moone sheenes onne hie;
Whyterre ys mie true loves shroude;

Whyterre yanne the mornynge skie,
Whyterre yanne the evenynge cloude.
    Mie love ys dedde,
    Gonne to hys deathe-bedde,
    Al under the wyllowe-tree,

Heere, upon mie true loves grave,
Schalle the baren fleurs be layde,
Ne one hallie seyncte to save
Al the celness of a mayde.
    Mie love ys dedde,
    Gonne to his deathe-bedde,
    Al under the wyllowe-tree.

Wythe mie hondes I 'll dent the brieres
Rounde hys hallie corse to gre,
Ouphante fairies, lyghte your fyres,
Heere mie boddie stille schalle bee.
    Mie love ys dedde,
    Gonne to hys deathe-bedde,
    Al under the wyllowe-tree.

Comme, wythe acorne-coppe and thorne,
Drayne my hartys blodde awaie;
Lyfe and all yttes goode I scorne,
Daunce bie nete, or feaste by daie.
    Mie love ys dedde,
    Gonne to hys deathe-bedde,
    Al under the wyllowe-tree.

Water wytches, crownede wythe reytes,
Bere mee to yer leathalle tyde.
I die; I comme; mie true love waytes.
Thos the damselle spake, and dyed.'

To proceed to the more immediate subject of the present Lecture, the character and writings of Burns.—Shakspeare says of some one, that 'he was like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring.' Burns, the poet, was not such a man. He had a strong mind, and a strong body, the fellow to it. He had a real heart of flesh and blood beating in his bosom—you can almost hear it throb. Some one said, that if you had shaken hands with him, his hand would have burnt yours. The Gods, indeed, 'made him poetical'; but nature had a hand in him first. His heart was in the right place. He did not 'create a soul under the ribs of death,' by tinkling siren sounds, or by piling up centos of poetic diction; but for the artificial flowers of poetry, he plucked the mountain-daisy under his feet; and a field-mouse, hurrying from its ruined dwelling, could inspire him

with the sentiments of terror and pity. He held the plough or the pen with the same firm, manly grasp; nor did he cut out poetry as we cut out watch-papers, with finical dexterity, nor from the same flimsy materials. Burns was not like Shakspeare in the range of his genius; but there is something of the same magnanimity, directness, and unaffected character about him. He was not a sickly sentimentalist, a namby-pamby poet, a mincing metre ballad-monger, any more than Shakspeare. He would as soon hear 'a brazen candlestick tuned, or a dry wheel grate on the axletree.' He was as much of a man—not a twentieth part as much of a poet as Shakspeare. With but little of his imagination or inventive power, he had the same life of mind: within the narrow circle of personal feeling or domestic incidents, the pulse of his poetry flows as healthily and vigorously. He had an eye to see; a heart to feel:—no more. His pictures of good fellowship, of social glee, of quaint humour, are equal to any thing; they come up to nature, and they cannot go beyond it. The sly jest collected in his laughing eye at the sight of the grotesque and ludicrous in manners—the large tear rolled down his manly cheek at the sight of another's distress. He has made us as well acquainted with himself as it is possible to be; has let out the honest impulses of his native disposition, the unequal conflict of the passions in his breast, with the same frankness and truth of description. His strength is not greater than his weakness: his virtues were greater than his vices. His virtues belonged to his genius: his vices to his situation, which did not correspond to his genius.

It has been usual to attack Burns's moral character, and the moral tendency of his writings at the same time; and Mr. Wordsworth, in a letter to Mr. Gray, Master of the High School at Edinburgh, in attempting to defend, has only laid him open to a more serious and unheard-of responsibility. Mr. Gray might very well have sent him back, in return for his epistle, the answer of Holofernes in Love's Labour's Lost:—'*Via* goodman Dull, thou hast spoken no word all this while.' The author of this performance, which is as weak in effect as it is pompous in pretension, shews a great dislike of Robespierre, Buonaparte, and of Mr. Jeffrey, whom he, by some unaccountable fatality, classes together as the three most formidable enemies of the human race that have appeared in his (Mr. Wordsworth's) remembrance; but he betrays very little liking to Burns. He is, indeed, anxious to get him out of the unhallowed clutches of the Edinburgh Reviewers (as a mere matter of poetical privilege), only to bring him before a graver and higher tribunal, which is his own; and after repeating and insinuating ponderous charges against him, shakes his head, and declines giving any opinion in so tremendous

a case; so that though the judgment of the former critic is set aside, poor Burns remains just where he was, and nobody gains any thing by the cause but Mr. Wordsworth, in an increasing opinion of his own wisdom and purity. 'Out upon this half-faced fellowship!' The author of the Lyrical Ballads has thus missed a fine opportunity of doing Burns justice and himself honour. He might have shewn himself a philosophical prose-writer, as well as a philosophical poet. He might have offered as amiable and as gallant a defence of the Muses, as my uncle Toby, in the honest simplicity of his heart, did of the army. He might have said at once, instead of making a parcel of wry faces over the matter, that Burns had written Tam o' Shanter, and that that alone was enough; that he could hardly have described the excesses of mad, hairbrained, roaring mirth and convivial indulgence, which are the soul of it, if he himself had not 'drunk full ofter of the ton than of the well'—unless 'the act and practique part of life had been the mistress of his theorique.' Mr. Wordsworth might have quoted such lines as—

> 'The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
> Wi' favours secret, sweet, and precious';—

or,

> 'Care, mad to see a man so happy,
> E'en drown'd himself among the nappy';

and fairly confessed that he could not have written such lines from a want of proper habits and previous sympathy; and that till some great puritanical genius should arise to do these things equally well without any knowledge of them, the world might forgive Burns the injuries he had done his health and fortune in his poetical apprenticeship to experience, for the pleasure he had afforded them. Instead of this, Mr. Wordsworth hints, that with different personal habits and greater strength of mind, Burns would have written differently, and almost as well as *he* does. He might have taken that line of Gay's,

> 'The fly that sips treacle is lost in the sweets,'—

and applied it in all its force and pathos to the poetical character. He might have argued that poets are men of genius, and that a man of genius is not a machine; that they live in a state of intellectual intoxication, and that it is too much to expect them to be distinguished by peculiar *sang froid*, circumspection, and sobriety. Poets are by nature men of stronger imagination and keener sensibilities than others; and it is a contradiction to suppose them at the same time governed only by the cool, dry, calculating dictates of reason and foresight. Mr. Wordsworth might have ascertained the boundaries that part the

provinces of reason and imagination:—that it is the business of the understanding to exhibit things in their relative proportions and ultimate consequences—of the imagination to insist on their immediate impressions, and to indulge their strongest impulses; but it is the poet's office to pamper the imagination of his readers and his own with the extremes of present ecstacy or agony, to snatch the swift-winged golden minutes, the torturing hour, and to banish the dull, prosaic, monotonous realities of life, both from his thoughts and from his practice. Mr. Wordsworth might have shewn how it is that all men of genius, or of originality and independence of mind, are liable to practical errors, from the very confidence their superiority inspires, which makes them fly in the face of custom and prejudice, always rashly, sometimes unjustly; for, after all, custom and prejudice are not without foundation in truth and reason, and no one individual is a match for the world in power, very few in knowledge. The world may altogether be set down as older and wiser than any single person in it.

Again, our philosophical letter-writer might have enlarged on the temptations to which Burns was exposed from his struggles with fortune and the uncertainty of his fate. He might have shewn how a poet, not born to wealth or title, was kept in a constant state of feverish anxiety with respect to his fame and the means of a precarious livelihood: that 'from being chilled with poverty, steeped in contempt, he had passed into the sunshine of fortune, and was lifted to the very pinnacle of public favour'; yet even there could not count on the continuance of success, but was, 'like the giddy sailor on the mast, ready with every blast to topple down into the fatal bowels of the deep!' He might have traced his habit of ale-house tippling to the last long precious draught of his favourite usquebaugh, which he took in the prospect of bidding farewel for ever to his native land; and his conjugal infidelities to his first disappointment in love, which would not have happened to him, if he had been born to a small estate in land, or bred up behind a counter!

Lastly, Mr. Wordsworth might have shewn the incompatibility between the Muses and the Excise, which never agreed well together, or met in one seat, till they were unaccountably reconciled on Rydal Mount. He must know (no man better) the distraction created by the opposite calls of business and of fancy, the torment of extents, the plague of receipts laid in order or mislaid, the disagreeableness of exacting penalties or paying the forfeiture; and how all this (together with the broaching of casks and the splashing of beer-barrels) must have preyed upon a mind like Burns, with more than his natural sensibility and none of his acquired firmness.

Mr. Coleridge, alluding to this circumstance of the promotion of the Scottish Bard to be 'a gauger of ale-firkins,' in a poetical epistle to his friend Charles Lamb, calls upon him in a burst of heartfelt indignation, to gather a wreath of henbane, nettles, and nightshade,

'—— ——To twine
The illustrious brow of Scotch nobility.'

If, indeed, Mr. Lamb had undertaken to write a letter in defence of Burns, how different would it have been from this of Mr. Wordsworth's! How much better than I can even imagine it to have been done!

It is hardly reasonable to look for a hearty or genuine defence of Burns from the pen of Mr. Wordsworth; for there is no common link of sympathy between them. Nothing can be more different or hostile than the spirit of their poetry. Mr. Wordsworth's poetry is the poetry of mere sentiment and pensive contemplation: Burns's is a very highly sublimated essence of animal existence. With Burns, 'self-love and social are the same'—

'And we 'll tak a cup of kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.'

Mr. Wordsworth is 'himself alone,' a recluse philosopher, or a reluctant spectator of the scenes of many-coloured life; moralising on them, not describing, not entering into them. Robert Burns has exerted all the vigour of his mind, all the happiness of his nature, in exalting the pleasures of wine, of love, and good fellowship: but in Mr. Wordsworth there is a total disunion and divorce of the faculties of the mind from those of the body; the banns are forbid, or a separation is austerely pronounced from bed and board—*a mensâ et thoro*. From the Lyrical Ballads, it does not appear that men eat or drink, marry or are given in marriage. If we lived by every sentiment that proceeded out of mouths, and not by bread or wine, or if the species were continued like trees (to borrow an expression from the great Sir Thomas Brown), Mr. Wordsworth's poetry would be just as good as ever. It is not so with Burns: he is 'famous for the keeping of it up,' and in his verse is ever fresh and gay. For this, it seems, he has fallen under the displeasure of the Edinburgh Reviewers, and the still more formidable patronage of Mr. Wordsworth's pen.

'This, this was the unkindest cut of all.'

I was going to give some extracts out of this composition in

support of what I have said, but I find them too tedious. Indeed (if I may be allowed to speak my whole mind, under correction) Mr. Wordsworth could not be in any way expected to tolerate or give a favourable interpretation to Burns's constitutional foibles—even his best virtues are not good enough for him. He is repelled and driven back into himself, not less by the worth than by the faults of others. His taste is as exclusive and repugnant as his genius. It is because so few things give him pleasure, that he gives pleasure to so few people. It is not every one who can perceive the sublimity of a daisy, or the pathos to be extracted from a withered thorn!

To proceed from Burns's patrons to his poetry, than which no two things can be more different. His 'Twa Dogs' is a very spirited piece of description, both as it respects the animal and human creation, and conveys a very vivid idea of the manners both of high and low life. The burlesque panegyric of the first dog,

> 'His locked, lettered, braw brass collar
> Shew'd him the gentleman and scholar'—

reminds one of Launce's account of his dog Crabbe, where he is said, as an instance of his being in the way of promotion, 'to have got among three or four gentleman-like dogs under the Duke's table.' The 'Halloween' is the most striking and picturesque description of local customs and scenery. The Brigs of Ayr, the Address to a Haggis, Scotch Drink, and innumerable others are, however, full of the same kind of characteristic and comic painting. But his master-piece in this way is his Tam o' Shanter. I shall give the beginning of it, but I am afraid I shall hardly know when to leave off.

> 'When chapman billies leave the street,
> And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,
> As market-days are wearing late,
> And folk begin to tak the gate;
> While we sit bousing at the nappy,
> And getting fou and unco happy,
> We think na on the lang Scots miles,
> The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,
> That lie between us and our hame,
> Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
> Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
> Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.
>
> This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
> As he frae Ayr ae night did canter;
> (Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
> For honest men and bonny lasses.)

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October
Ae market-day thou was na sober;
That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirton Jean till Monday—
She prophesy'd, that late or soon,
Thou wad be found deep drown'd in Doon;
Or catcht wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs an clatter,
And aye the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious
Wi' favours secret, sweet, and precious:
The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy;
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills of life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r—its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow, falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;

Or like the Borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm.—
Nae man can tether time or tide,
The hour approaches, Tam maun ride;
That hour o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in,
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast,
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd,
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
That night a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles haulding fast his gude blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glowring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.—

By this time Tam was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw, the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak 's neck bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.—
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
Whan, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing;
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' Tippenny, we fear nae evil,
Wi' Usqueba, we 'll face the devil!

The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na de'ils a boddle.
But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
Till by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light,
And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance,
Nae light cotillion new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
As winnock-bunker, in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A touzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge;
He screw'd the pipes, and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl—
Coffins stood round like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And, by some devilish cantrip slight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light—
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet-airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns;
A thief, new cutted frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' bluid red rusted;
Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair, o' horrible and awfu',
Which e'en to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd amaz'd, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The Piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka Carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam! had they been queans
A' plump and strapping in their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hundred linen!

Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them aff my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!
  But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Louping and flinging on a crummock,
I wonder did na turn thy stomach.

  But Tam ken'd what was what fu' brawly,
There was ae winsome wench and waly,
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after ken'd on Carrick shore;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonnie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear—)
Her cutty sark o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vaunty.—
Ah! little ken'd thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

  But here my Muse her wing maun cour;
Sic flights are far beyond her power:
To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
(A souple jade she was, and strang)
And how Tam stood like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Ev'n Satan glowr'd and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch't, and blew wi' might and main;
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, 'Weel done, Cutty Sark!'
And in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

  As bees biz out wi' angry fyke
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager rins the market-crowd,
When 'Catch the thief!' resounds aloud;
So Maggie rins—the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch skreech and hollow,

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou 'll get thy fairin'!
In hell they 'll roast thee like a herrin'!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin'!
Kate soon will be a waefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane o' the brig;
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross;
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind, her ain grey tail:
The Carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son tak heed:
Whane'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or Cutty Sarks rin in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys owre dear;
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.'

Burns has given the extremes of licentious eccentricity and convivial enjoyment, in the story of this scape-grace, and of patriarchal simplicity and gravity in describing the old national character of the Scottish peasantry. The Cotter's Saturday Night is a noble and pathetic picture of human manners, mingled with a fine religious awe. It comes over the mind like a slow and solemn strain of music. The soul of the poet aspires from this scene of low-thoughted care, and reposes, in trembling hope, on 'the bosom of its Father and its God.' Hardly any thing can be more touching than the following stanzas, for instance, whether as they describe human interests, or breathe a lofty devotional spirit.

'The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher through
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin noise and glee.

His wee-bit ingle, blinkin bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
The lisping infant, prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun',
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town;
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

Wi' joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's welfare kindly spiers;
The social hours, swift-winged, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears:
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view;
The mither, wi' her needle an' her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel 's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
With heart-struck, anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears it 's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappan youth; he taks the mother's eye;
Blithe Jenny sees the visit 's no ill ta'en;
The father craks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate an' laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn 's respected like the lave.

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food:

The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell,
An' aft he 's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion wi' judicious care;
And 'Let us worship God!' he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps Dundee's wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name;
Or noble Elgin beets the heav'n-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.'—

Burns's poetical epistles to his friends are admirable, whether for the touches of satire, the painting of character, or the sincerity of friendship they display. Those to Captain Grose, and to Davie, a brother poet, are among the best:—they are 'the true pathos and sublime of human life.' His prose-letters are sometimes tinctured with affectation. They seem written by a man who has been admired for his wit, and is expected on all occasions to shine. Those in which he expresses his ideas of natural beauty in reference to Alison's Essay on Taste, and advocates the keeping up the remembrances of old customs and seasons, are the most powerfully written. His English serious odes and moral stanzas are, in general, failures, such as the The Lament, Man was made to Mourn, &c. nor do I much admire his 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled.' In this strain of didactic or sentimental moralising, the lines to Glencairn are the most happy, and impressive. His imitations of the old humorous ballad style of Ferguson's songs are no whit inferior to the admirable originals, such as 'John Anderson, my Joe,' and many more. But of all his productions, the pathetic and serious love-songs which he

has left behind him, in the manner of the old ballads, are perhaps those which take the deepest and most lasting hold of the mind. Such are the lines to Mary Morison, and those entitled Jessy.

> 'Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear—
> Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear—
> Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet,
> And soft as their parting tear—Jessy!
>
> Altho' thou maun never be mine,
> Altho' even hope is denied;
> 'Tis sweeter for thee despairing,
> Than aught in the world beside—Jessy!'

The conclusion of the other is as follows.

> 'Yestreen, when to the trembling string
> The dance gaed through the lighted ha',
> To thee my fancy took its wing,
> I sat, but neither heard nor saw.
> Tho' this was fair, and that was bra',
> And yon the toast of a' the town,
> I sighed and said among them a',
> Ye are na' Mary Morison.'

That beginning, 'Oh gin my love were a bonny red rose,' is a piece of rich and fantastic description. One would think that nothing could surpass these in beauty of expression, and in true pathos: and nothing does or can, but some of the old Scotch ballads themselves. There is in them a still more original cast of thought, a more romantic imagery—the thistle's glittering down, the gilliflower on the old garden-wall, the horseman's silver bells, the hawk on its perch—a closer intimacy with nature, a firmer reliance on it, as the only stock of wealth which the mind has to resort to, a more infantine simplicity of manners, a greater strength of affection, hopes longer cherished and longer deferred, sighs that the heart dare hardly heave, and 'thoughts that often lie too deep for tears.' We seem to feel that those who wrote and sung them (the early minstrels) lived in the open air, wandering on from place to place with restless feet and thoughts, and lending an ever-open ear to the fearful accidents of war or love, floating on the breath of old tradition or common fame, and moving the strings of their harp with sounds that sank into a nation's heart. How fine an illustration of this is that passage in Don Quixote, where the knight and Sancho, going in search of Dulcinea, inquire their way of the countryman, who was driving his mules to plough before break of day, 'singing the ancient ballad of Ronces-

valles.' Sir Thomas Overbury describes his country girl as still accompanied with fragments of old songs. One of the best and most striking descriptions of the effects of this mixture of national poetry and music is to be found in one of the letters of Archbishop Herring, giving an account of a confirmation-tour in the mountains of Wales.

'That pleasure over, our work became very arduous, for we were to mount a rock, and in many places of the road, over natural stairs of stone. I submitted to this, which they told me was but a taste of the country, and to prepare me for worse things to come. However, worse things did not come that morning, for we dined soon after out of our own wallets; and though our inn stood in a place of the most frightful solitude, and the best formed for the habitation of monks (who once possessed it) in the world, yet we made a cheerful meal. The novelty of the thing gave me spirits, and the air gave me appetite much keener than the knife I ate with. We had our music too; for there came in a harper, who soon drew about us a group of figures that Hogarth would have given any price for. The harper was in his true place and attitude; a man and woman stood before him, singing to his instrument wildly, but not disagreeably; a little dirty child was playing with the bottom of the harp; a woman in a sick night-cap hanging over the stairs; a boy with crutches fixed in a staring attention, and a girl carding wool in the chimney, and rocking a cradle with her naked feet, interrupted in her business by the charms of the music; all ragged and dirty, and all silently attentive. These figures gave us a most entertaining picture, and would please you or any man of observation; and one reflection gave me a particular comfort, that the assembly before us demonstrated, that even here, the influential sun warmed poor mortals, and inspired them with love and music.'

I could wish that Mr. Wilkie had been recommended to take this group as the subject of his admirable pencil; he has painted a picture of Bathsheba, instead.

In speaking of the old Scotch ballads, I need do no more than mention the name of Auld Robin Gray. The effect of reading this old ballad is as if all our hopes and fears hung upon the last fibre of the heart, and we felt that giving way. What silence, what loneliness, what leisure for grief and despair!

'My father pressed me sair,
Though my mother did na' speak;
But she looked in my face
Till my heart was like to break.'

The irksomeness of the situations, the sense of painful dependence, is excessive; and yet the sentiment of deep-rooted, patient affection triumphs over all, and is the only impression that remains. Lady

Ann Bothwell's Lament is not, I think, quite equal to the lines beginning—

'O waly, waly, up the bank,
  And waly, waly, down the brae,
And waly, waly, yon burn side,
  Where I and my love wont to gae.
I leant my back unto an aik,
  I thought it was a trusty tree;
But first it bow'd, and syne it brak,
  Sae my true-love 's forsaken me.

O waly, waly, love is bonny,
  A little time while it is new;
But when its auld, it waxeth cauld,
  And fades awa' like the morning dew.
When cockle-shells turn siller bells,
  And muscles grow on every tree,
Whan frost and snaw sall warm us aw,
  Then sall my love prove true to me.

Now Arthur seat sall be my bed,
  The sheets sall ne'er be fyld by me:
Saint Anton's well sall be my drink,
  Since my true-love 's forsaken me.
Martinmas wind, when wilt thou blaw,
  And shake the green leaves aff the tree?
O gentle death, whan wilt thou cum,
  And tak' a life that wearies me!

'Tis not the frost that freezes sae,
  Nor blawing snaw's inclemencie,
'Tis not sic cauld, that makes me cry,
  But my love's heart grown cauld to me.
Whan we came in by Glasgow town,
  We were a comely sight to see,
My love was clad in black velvet,
  And I myself in cramasie.

But had I wist before I kist,
  That love had been sae hard to win;
I'd lockt my heart in case of gowd,
  And pinn'd it with a siller pin.
And oh! if my poor babe were born,
  And set upon the nurse's knee,
And I mysel in the cold grave!
  Since my true-love 's forsaken me.'

The finest modern imitation of this style is the Braes of Yarrow; and perhaps the finest subject for a story of the same kind in any

modern book, is that told in Turner's History of England, of a Mahometan woman, who having fallen in love with an English merchant, the father of Thomas à Becket, followed him all the way to England, knowing only the word London, and the name of her lover, Gilbert.

But to have done with this, which is rather too serious a subject.—The old English ballads are of a gayer and more lively turn. They are adventurous and romantic; but they relate chiefly to good living and good fellowship, to drinking and hunting scenes. Robin Hood is the chief of these, and he still, in imagination, haunts Sherwood Forest. The archers green glimmer under the waving branches; the print on the grass remains where they have just finished their noon-tide meal under the green-wood tree; and the echo of their bugle-horn and twanging bows resounds through the tangled mazes of the forest, as the tall slim deer glances startled by.

> 'The trees in Sherwood Forest are old and good;
> The grass beneath them now is dimly green:
> Are they deserted all? Is no young mien,
> With loose-slung bugle, met within the wood?
>
> No arrow found—foil'd of its antler'd food—
> Struck in the oak's rude side?—Is there nought seen
> To mark the revelries which there have been,
> In the sweet days of merry Robin Hood?
>
> Go there with summer, and with evening—go
> In the soft shadows, like some wand'ring man—
> And thou shalt far amid the forest know
> The archer-men in green, with belt and bow,
> Feasting on pheasant, river-fowl and swan,
> With Robin at their head, and Marian.'[1]

LECTURE VIII

ON THE LIVING POETS

> 'No more of talk where God or Angel guest
> With man, as with his friend, familiar us'd
> To sit indulgent.'———

GENIUS is the heir of fame; but the hard condition on which the bright reversion must be earned is the loss of life. Fame is the recompense not of the living, but of the dead. The temple of fame

[1] Sonnet on Sherwood Forest, by J. H. Reynolds, Esq.

stands upon the grave: the flame that burns upon its altars is kindled from the ashes of great men. Fame itself is immortal, but it is not begot till the breath of genius is extinguished. For fame is not popularity, the shout of the multitude, the idle buzz of fashion, the venal puff, the soothing flattery of favour or of friendship; but it is the spirit of a man surviving himself in the minds and thoughts of other men, undying and imperishable. It is the power which the intellect exercises over the intellect, and the lasting homage which is paid to it, as such, independently of time and circumstances, purified from partiality and evil-speaking. Fame is the sound which the stream of high thoughts, carried down to future ages, makes as it flows—deep, distant, murmuring evermore like the waters of the mighty ocean. He who has ears truly touched to this music, is in a manner deaf to the voice of popularity.—The love of fame differs from mere vanity in this, that the one is immediate and personal, the other ideal and abstracted. It is not the direct and gross homage paid to himself, that the lover of true fame seeks or is proud of; but the indirect and pure homage paid to the eternal forms of truth and beauty as they are reflected in his mind, that gives him confidence and hope. The love of nature is the first thing in the mind of the true poet: the admiration of himself the last. A man of genius cannot well be a coxcomb; for his mind is too full of other things to be much occupied with his own person. He who is conscious of great powers in himself, has also a high standard of excellence with which to compare his efforts: he appeals also to a test and judge of merit, which is the highest, but which is too remote, grave, and impartial, to flatter his self-love extravagantly, or puff him up with intolerable and vain conceit. This, indeed, is one test of genius and of real greatness of mind, whether a man can wait patiently and calmly for the award of posterity, satisfied with the unwearied exercise of his faculties, retired within the sanctuary of his own thoughts; or whether he is eager to forestal his own immortality, and mortgage it for a newspaper puff. He who thinks much of himself, will be in danger of being forgotten by the rest of the world: he who is always trying to lay violent hands on reputation, will not secure the best and most lasting. If the restless candidate for praise takes no pleasure, no sincere and heartfelt delight in his works, but as they are admired and applauded by others, what should others see in them to admire or applaud? They cannot be expected to admire them because they are *his*; but for the truth and nature contained in them, which must first be inly felt and copied with severe delight, from the love of truth and nature, before it can ever appear there. Was Raphael, think you, when he painted his pictures of the Virgin and Child in all their inconceivable

truth and beauty of expression, thinking most of his subject or of himself? Do you suppose that Titian, when he painted a landscape, was pluming himself on being thought the finest colourist in the world, or making himself so by looking at nature? Do you imagine that Shakspeare, when he wrote Lear or Othello, was thinking of any thing but Lear and Othello? Or that Mr. Kean, when he plays these characters, is thinking of the audience?—No: he who would be great in the eyes of others, must first learn to be nothing in his own. The love of fame, as it enters at times into his mind, is only another name for the love of excellence; or it is the ambition to attain the highest excellence, sanctioned by the highest authority—that of time.

Those minds, then, which are the most entitled to expect it, can best put up with the postponement of their claims to lasting fame. They can afford to wait. They are not afraid that truth and nature will ever wear out; will lose their gloss with novelty, or their effect with fashion. If their works have the seeds of immortality in them, they will live; if they have not they care little about them as theirs. They do not complain of the start which others have got of them in the race of everlasting renown, or of the impossibility of attaining the honours which time alone can give, during the term of their natural lives. They know that no applause, however loud and violent, can anticipate or over-rule the judgment of posterity; that the opinion of no one individual, nor of any one generation, can have the weight, the authority (to say nothing of the force of sympathy and prejudice), which must belong to that of successive generations. The brightest living reputation cannot be equally imposing to the imagination, with that which is covered and rendered venerable with the hoar of innumerable ages. No modern production can have the same atmosphere of sentiment around it, as the remains of classical antiquity. But then our moderns may console themselves with the reflection, that they will be old in their turn, and will either be remembered with still increasing honours, or quite forgotten!

I would speak of the living poets as I have spoken of the dead (for I think highly of many of them); but I cannot speak of them with the same reverence, because I do not feel it; with the same confidence, because I cannot have the same authority to sanction my opinion. I cannot be absolutely certain that any body, twenty years hence, will think any thing about any of them; but we may be pretty sure that Milton and Shakspeare will be remembered twenty years hence. We are, therefore, not without excuse if we husband our enthusiasm a little, and do not prematurely lay out our whole stock in untried ventures, and what may turn out to be false bottoms. I

have myself out-lived one generation of favourite poets, the Darwins, the Hayleys, the Sewards. Who reads them now?—If, however, I have not the verdict of posterity to bear me out in bestowing the most unqualified praises on their immediate successors, it is also to be remembered, that neither does it warrant me in condemning them. Indeed, it was not my wish to go into this ungrateful part of the subject; but something of the sort is expected from me, and I must run the gauntlet as well as I can. Another circumstance that adds to the difficulty of doing justice to all parties is, that I happen to have had a personal acquaintance with some of these jealous votaries of the Muses; and that is not the likeliest way to imbibe a high opinion of the rest. Poets do not praise one another in the language of hyperbole. I am afraid, therefore, that I labour under a degree of prejudice against some of the most popular poets of the day, from an early habit of deference to the critical opinions of some of the least popular. I cannot say that I ever learnt much about Shakspeare or Milton, Spenser or Chaucer, from these professed guides; for I never heard them say much about them. They were always talking of themselves and one another. Nor am I certain that this sort of personal intercourse with living authors, while it takes away all real relish or freedom of opinion with regard to their contemporaries, greatly enhances our respect for themselves. Poets are not ideal beings; but have their prose-sides, like the commonest of the people. We often hear persons say, What they would have given to have seen Shakspeare! For my part, I would give a great deal not to have seen him; at least, if he was at all like any body else that I have ever seen. But why should he; for his works are not! This is, doubtless, one great advantage which the dead have over the living. It is always fortunate for ourselves and others, when we are prevented from exchanging admiration for knowledge. The splendid vision that in youth haunts our idea of the poetical character, fades, upon acquaintance, into the light of common day; as the azure tints that deck the mountain's brow are lost on a nearer approach to them. It is well, according to the moral of one of the Lyrical Ballads,—'To leave Yarrow unvisited.' But to leave this 'face-making,' and begin.—

I am a great admirer of the female writers of the present day; they appear to me like so many modern Muses. I could be in love with Mrs. Inchbald, romantic with Mrs. Radcliffe, and sarcastic with Madame D'Arblay: but they are novel-writers, and, like Audrey, may 'thank the Gods for not having made them poetical.' Did any one here ever read Mrs. Leicester's School? If they have not, I wish they would; there will be just time before the next three

volumes of the Tales of My Landlord come out. That is not a school of affectation, but of humanity. No one can think too highly of the work, or highly enough of the author.

The first poetess I can recollect is Mrs. Barbauld, with whose works I became acquainted before those of any other author, male or female, when I was learning to spell words of one syllable in her story-books for children. I became acquainted with her poetical works long after in Enfield's Speaker; and remember being much divided in my opinion at that time, between her Ode to Spring and Collins's Ode to Evening. I wish I could repay my childish debt of gratitude in terms of appropriate praise. She is a very pretty poetess; and, to my fancy, strews the flowers of poetry most agreeably round the borders of religious controversy. She is a neat and pointed prose-writer. Her 'Thoughts on the Inconsistency of Human Expectations,' is one of the most ingenious and sensible essays in the language. There is the same idea in one of Barrow's Sermons.

Mrs. Hannah More is another celebrated modern poetess, and I believe still living. She has written a great deal which I have never read.

Miss Baillie must make up this trio of female poets. Her tragedies and comedies, one of each to illustrate each of the passions, separately from the rest, are heresies in the dramatic art. She is a Unitarian in poetry. With her the passions are, like the French republic, one and indivisible: they are not so in nature, or in Shakspeare. Mr. Southey has, I believe, somewhere expressed an opinion, that the Basil of Miss Baillie is superior to Romeo and Juliet. I shall not stay to contradict him. On the other hand, I prefer her De Montfort, which was condemned on the stage, to some later tragedies, which have been more fortunate—to the Remorse, Bertram, and lastly, Fazio. There is in the chief character of that play a nerve, a continued unity of interest, a setness of purpose and precision of outline which John Kemble alone was capable of giving; and there is all the grace which women have in writing. In saying that De Montfort was a character which just suited Mr. Kemble, I mean to pay a compliment to both. He was not 'a man of no mark or likelihood': and what he could be supposed to do particularly well, must have a meaning in it. As to the other tragedies just mentioned, there is no reason why any common actor should not 'make mouths in them at the invisible event,'—one as well as another. Having thus expressed my sense of the merits of the authoress, I must add, that her comedy of the Election, performed last summer at the Lyceum with indifferent success, appears to me the perfection of baby-house theatricals. Every thing in it has such a *do-me-good* air, is so insipid

and amiable. Virtue seems such a pretty playing at make-believe, and vice is such a naughty word. It is a theory of some French author, that little girls ought not to be suffered to have dolls to play with, to call them *pretty dears*, to admire their black eyes and cherry cheeks, to lament and bewail over them if they fall down and hurt their faces, to praise them when they are good, and scold them when they are naughty. It is a school of affectation: Miss Baillie has profited of it. She treats her grown men and women as little girls treat their dolls—makes moral puppets of them, pulls the wires, and they talk virtue and act vice, according to their cue and the title prefixed to each comedy or tragedy, not from any real passions of their own, or love either of virtue or vice.

The transition from these to Mr. Rogers's Pleasures of Memory, is not far: he is a very lady-like poet. He is an elegant, but feeble writer. He wraps up obvious thoughts in a glittering cover of fine words; is full of enigmas with no meaning to them; is studiously inverted, and scrupulously far-fetched; and his verses are poetry, chiefly because no particle, line, or syllable of them reads like prose. He differs from Milton in this respect, who is accused of having inserted a number of prosaic lines in Paradise Lost. This kind of poetry, which is a more minute and inoffensive species of the Della Cruscan, is like the game of asking what one's thoughts are like. It is a tortuous, tottering, wriggling, fidgetty translation of every thing from the vulgar tongue, into all the tantalizing, teasing, tripping, lisping *mimminee-pimminee* of the highest brilliancy and fashion of poetical diction. You have nothing like truth of nature or simplicity of expression. The fastidious and languid reader is never shocked by meeting, from the rarest chance in the world, with a single homely phrase or intelligible idea. You cannot see the thought for the ambiguity of the language, the figure for the finery, the picture for the varnish. The whole is refined, and frittered away into an appearance of the most evanescent brilliancy and tremulous imbecility.—There is no other fault to be found with the Pleasures of Memory, than a want of taste and genius. The sentiments are amiable, and the notes at the end highly interesting, particularly the one relating to the Countess Pillar (as it is called) between Appleby and Penrith, erected (as the inscription tells the thoughtful traveller) by Anne Countess of Pembroke, in the year 1648, in memory of her last parting with her good and pious mother in the same place in the year 1616.

> 'To shew that power of love, how great
> Beyond all human estimate.'

This story is also told in the poem, but with so many artful innuendos and tinsel words, that it is hardly intelligible; and still less does it reach the heart.

Campbell's Pleasures of Hope is of the same school, in which a painful attention is paid to the expression in proportion as there is little to express, and the decomposition of prose is substituted for the composition of poetry. How much the sense and keeping in the ideas are sacrificed to a jingle of words and epigrammatic turn of expression, may be seen in such lines as the following:—one of the characters, an old invalid, wishes to end his days under

> 'Some hamlet shade, to yield his sickly form
> Health in the breeze, and shelter in the storm.'

Now the antithesis here totally fails: for it is the breeze, and not the tree, or as it is quaintly expressed, *hamlet shade*, that affords health, though it is the tree that affords shelter in or from the storm. Instances of the same sort of *curiosa infelicitas* are not rare in this author. His verses on the Battle of Hohenlinden have considerable spirit and animation. His Gertrude of Wyoming is his principal performance. It is a kind of historical paraphrase of Mr. Wordsworth's poem of Ruth. It shews little power, or power enervated by extreme fastidiousness. It is

> '——— Of outward show
> Elaborate; of inward less exact.'

There are painters who trust more to the setting of their pictures than to the truth of the likeness. Mr. Campbell always seems to me to be thinking how his poetry will look when it comes to be hot-pressed on superfine wove paper, to have a disproportionate eye to points and commas, and dread of errors of the press. He is so afraid of doing wrong, of making the smallest mistake, that he does little or nothing. Lest he should wander irretrievably from the right path, he stands still. He writes according to established etiquette. He offers the Muses no violence. If he lights upon a good thought, he immediately drops it for fear of spoiling a good thing. When he launches a sentiment that you think will float him triumphantly for once to the bottom of the stanza, he stops short at the end of the first or second line, and stands shivering on the brink of beauty, afraid to trust himself to the fathomless abyss. *Tutus nimium, timidusque procellarum.* His very circumspection betrays him. The poet, as well as the woman, that deliberates, is undone. He is much like a man whose heart fails him just as he is going up in a balloon, and who breaks his neck by flinging himself out of it

when it is too late. Mr. Campbell too often maims and mangles his ideas before they are full formed, to fit them to the Procustes' bed of criticism; or strangles his intellectual offspring in the birth, lest they should come to an untimely end in the Edinburgh Review. He plays the hypercritic on himself, and starves his genius to death from a needless apprehension of a plethora. No writer who thinks habitually of the critics, either to tremble at their censures or set them at defiance, can write well. It is the business of reviewers to watch poets, not of poets to watch reviewers.—There is one admirable simile in this poem, of the European child brought by the sooty Indian in his hand, 'like morning brought by night.' The love-scenes in Gertrude of Wyoming breathe a balmy voluptuousness of sentiment; but they are generally broken off in the middle; they are like the scent of a bank of violets, faint and rich, which the gale suddenly conveys in a different direction. Mr. Campbell is careful of his own reputation, and economical of the pleasures of his readers. He treats them as the fox in the fable treated his guest the stork; or, to use his own expression, his fine things are

'Like angels' visits, few, and far between.'[1]

There is another fault in this poem, which is the mechanical structure of the fable. The most striking events occur in the shape of antitheses. The story is cut into the form of a parallelogram. There is the same systematic alternation of good and evil, of violence and repose, that there is of light and shade in a picture. The Indian, who is the chief agent in the interest of the poem, vanishes and returns after long intervals, like the periodical revolutions of the planets. He unexpectedly appears just in the nick of time, after years of absence, and without any known reason but the convenience of the author and the astonishment of the reader; as if nature were a machine constructed on a principle of complete contrast, to produce a theatrical effect. *Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus.* Mr. Campbell's savage never appears but upon great occasions, and then his punctuality is preternatural and alarming. He is the most wonderful instance on record of poetical *reliability*. The most dreadful mischiefs happen at the most mortifying moments; and when your expectations are wound up to the highest pitch, you are sure to have them knocked on the head by a premeditated and

[1] There is the same idea in Blair's Grave.

'——— Its visits,
Like those of angels, short, and far between.

Mr. Campbell in altering the expression has spoiled it. 'Few,' and 'far between,' are the same thing.

remorseless stroke of the poet's pen. This is done so often for the convenience of the author, that in the end it ceases to be for the satisfaction of the reader.

Tom Moore is a poet of a quite different stamp. He is as heedless, gay, and prodigal of his poetical wealth, as the other is careful, reserved, and parsimonious. The genius of both is national. Mr. Moore's Muse is another Ariel, as light, as tricksy, as indefatigable, and as humane a spirit. His fancy is for ever on the wing, flutters in the gale, glitters in the sun. Every thing lives, moves, and sparkles in his poetry, while over all love waves his purple light. His thoughts are as restless, as many, and as bright as the insects that people the sun's beam. 'So work the honey-bees,' extracting liquid sweets from opening buds; so the butterfly expands its wings to the idle air; so the thistle's silver down is wafted over summer seas. An airy voyager on life's stream, his mind inhales the fragrance of a thousand shores, and drinks of endless pleasures under halcyon skies. Wherever his footsteps tend over the enamelled ground of fairy fiction—

> 'Around him the bees in play flutter and cluster,
> And gaudy butterflies frolic around.'

The fault of Mr. Moore is an exuberance of involuntary power. His facility of production lessens the effect of, and hangs as a dead weight upon, what he produces. His levity at last oppresses. The infinite delight he takes in such an infinite number of things, creates indifference in minds less susceptible of pleasure than his own. He exhausts attention by being inexhaustible. His variety cloys; his rapidity dazzles and distracts the sight. The graceful ease with which he lends himself to every subject, the genial spirit with which he indulges in every sentiment, prevents him from giving their full force to the masses of things, from connecting them into a whole. He wants intensity, strength, and grandeur. His mind does not brood over the great and permanent; it glances over the surfaces, the first impressions of things, instead of grappling with the deep-rooted prejudices of the mind, its inveterate habits, and that 'perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart.' His pen, as it is rapid and fanciful, wants momentum and passion. It requires the same principle to make us thoroughly like poetry, that makes us like ourselves so well, the feeling of continued identity. The impressions of Mr. Moore's poetry are detached, desultory, and physical. Its gorgeous colours brighten and fade like the rainbow's. Its sweetness evaporates like the effluvia exhaled from beds of flowers! His gay laughing style, which relates to the immediate pleasures of love or wine, is better

than his sentimental and romantic vein. His Irish melodies are not free from affectation and a certain sickliness of pretension. His serious descriptions are apt to run into flowery tenderness. His pathos sometimes melts into a mawkish sensibility, or crystallizes into all the prettinesses of allegorical language, and glittering hardness of external imagery. But he has wit at will, and of the first quality. His satirical and burlesque poetry is his best: it is first-rate. His Twopenny Post-Bag is a perfect 'nest of spicery'; where the Cayenne is not spared. The politician there sharpens the poet's pen. In this too, our bard resembles the bee—he has its honey and its sting.

Mr. Moore ought not to have written Lalla Rookh, even for three thousand guineas. His fame is worth more than that. He should have minded the advice of Fadladeen. It is not, however, a failure, so much as an evasion and a consequent disappointment of public expectation. He should have left it to others to break conventions with nations, and faith with the world. He should, at any rate, have kept his with the public. Lalla Rookh is not what people wanted to see whether Mr. Moore could do; namely, whether he could write a long epic poem. It is four short tales. The interest, however, is often high-wrought and tragic, but the execution still turns to the effeminate and voluptuous side. Fortitude of mind is the first requisite of a tragic or epic writer. Happiness of nature and felicity of genius are the pre-eminent characteristics of the bard of Erin. If he is not perfectly contented with what he is, all the world beside is. He had no temptation to risk any thing in adding to the love and admiration of his age, and more than one country.

> 'Therefore to be possessed with double pomp,
> To guard a title that was rich before,
> To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
> To throw a perfume on the violet,
> To smooth the ice, or add another hue
> Unto the rainbow, or with taper light
> To seek the beauteous eye of heav'n to garnish,
> Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.'

The same might be said of Mr. Moore's seeking to bind an epic crown, or the shadow of one, round his other laurels.

If Mr. Moore has not suffered enough personally, Lord Byron (judging from the tone of his writings) might be thought to have suffered too much to be a truly great poet. If Mr. Moore lays himself too open to all the various impulses of things, the outward shews of earth and sky, to every breath that blows, to every stray sentiment that crosses his fancy; Lord Byron shuts himself up too

much in the impenetrable gloom of his own thoughts, and buries the natural light of things in 'nook monastic.' The Giaour, the Corsair, Childe Harold, are all the same person, and they are apparently all himself. The everlasting repetition of one subject, the same dark ground of fiction, with the darker colours of the poet's mind spread over it, the unceasing accumulation of horrors on horror's head, steels the mind against the sense of pain, as inevitably as the unwearied Siren sounds and luxurious monotony of Mr. Moore's poetry make it inaccessible to pleasure. Lord Byron's poetry is as morbid as Mr. Moore's is careless and dissipated. He has more depth of passion, more force and impetuosity, but the passion is always of the same unaccountable character, at once violent and sullen, fierce and gloomy. It is not the passion of a mind struggling with misfortune, or the hopelessness of its desires, but of a mind preying upon itself, and disgusted with, or indifferent to all other things. There is nothing less poetical than this sort of unaccommodating selfishness. There is nothing more repulsive than this sort of ideal absorption of all the interests of others, of the good and ills of life, in the ruling passion and moody abstraction of a single mind, as if it would make itself the centre of the universe, and there was nothing worth cherishing but its intellectual diseases. It is like a cancer, eating into the heart of poetry. But still there is power; and power rivets attention and forces admiration. 'He hath a demon:' and that is the next thing to being full of the God. His brow collects the scattered gloom: his eye flashes livid fire that withers and consumes. But still we watch the progress of the scathing bolt with interest, and mark the ruin it leaves behind with awe. Within the contracted range of his imagination, he has great unity and truth of keeping. He chooses elements and agents congenial to his mind, the dark and glittering ocean, the frail bark hurrying before the storm, pirates and men that 'house on the wild sea with wild usages.' He gives the tumultuous eagerness of action, and the fixed despair of thought. In vigour of style and force of conception, he in one sense surpasses every writer of the present day. His indignant apothegms are like oracles of misanthropy. He who wishes for 'a curse to kill with,' may find it in Lord Byron's writings. Yet he has beauty lurking underneath his strength, tenderness sometimes joined with the phrenzy of despair. A flash of golden light sometimes follows from a stroke of his pencil, like a falling meteor. The flowers that adorn his poetry bloom over charnel-houses and the grave!

There is one subject on which Lord Byron is fond of writing, on which I wish he would not write—Buonaparte. Not that I quarrel with his writing for him, or against him, but with his writing both

for him and against him. What right has he to do this? Buonaparte's character, be it what else it may, does not change every hour according to his Lordship's varying humour. He is not a pipe for Fortune's finger, or for his Lordship's Muse, to play what stop she pleases on. Why should Lord Byron now laud him to the skies in the hour of his success, and then peevishly wreak his disappointment on the God of his idolatry? The man he writes of does not rise or fall with circumstances: but 'looks on tempests and is never shaken.' Besides, he is a subject for history, and not for poetry.

> 'Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread,
> But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
> And in themselves their pride lies buried;
> For at a frown they in their glory die.
> The painful warrior, famoused for fight,
> After a thousand victories once foil'd,
> Is from the book of honour razed quite,
> And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd.'

If Lord Byron will write any thing more on this hazardous theme, let him take these lines of Shakspeare for his guide, and finish them in the spirit of the original—they will then be worthy of the subject.

Walter Scott is the most popular of all the poets of the present day, and deservedly so. He describes that which is most easily and generally understood with more vivacity and effect than any body else. He has no excellences, either of a lofty or recondite kind, which lie beyond the reach of the most ordinary capacity to find out; but he has all the good qualities which all the world agree to understand. His style is clear, flowing, and transparent: his sentiments, of which his style is an easy and natural medium, are common to him with his readers. He has none of Mr. Wordsworth's *idiosyncracy*. He differs from his readers only in a greater range of knowledge and facility of expression. His poetry belongs to the class of *improvisatori* poetry. It has neither depth, height, nor breadth in it; neither uncommon strength, nor uncommon refinement of thought, sentiment, or language. It has no originality. But if this author has no research, no moving power in his own breast, he relies with the greater safety and success on the force of his subject. He selects a story such as is sure to please, full of incidents, characters, peculiar manners, costume, and scenery; and he tells it in a way that can offend no one. He never wearies or disappoints you. He is communicative and garrulous; but he is not his own hero. He never obtrudes himself on your notice to prevent your seeing the subject. What passes in the poem, passes much as it would have done in reality. The author has little or nothing to do with it. Mr. Scott has great

intuitive power of fancy, great vividness of pencil in placing external objects and events before the eye. The force of his mind is picturesque, rather than *moral.* He gives more of the features of nature than the soul of passion. He conveys the distinct outlines and visible changes in outward objects, rather than 'their mortal consequences.' He is very inferior to Lord Byron in intense passion, to Moore in delightful fancy, to Mr. Wordsworth in profound sentiment: but he has more picturesque power than any of them; that is, he places the objects themselves, about which *they* might feel and think, in a much more striking point of view, with greater variety of dress and attitude, and with more local truth of colouring. His imagery is Gothic and grotesque. The manners and actions have the interest and curiosity belonging to a wild country and a distant period of time. Few descriptions have a more complete reality, a more striking appearance of life and motion, than that of the warriors in the Lady of the Lake, who start up at the command of Rhoderic Dhu, from their concealment under the fern, and disappear again in an instant. The Lay of the Last Minstrel and Marmion are the first, and perhaps the best of his works. The Goblin Page, in the first of these, is a very interesting and inscrutable little personage. In reading these poems, I confess I am a little disconcerted, in turning over the page, to find Mr. Westall's pictures, which always seem *fac-similes* of the persons represented, with ancient costume and a theatrical air. This may be a compliment to Mr. Westall, but it is not one to Walter Scott. The truth is, there is a modern air in the midst of the antiquarian research of Mr. Scott's poetry. It is history or tradition in masquerade. Not only the crust of old words and images is worn off with time,—the substance is grown comparatively light and worthless. The forms are old and uncouth; but the spirit is effeminate and frivolous. This is a deduction from the praise I have given to his pencil for extreme fidelity, though it has been no obstacle to its drawing-room success. He has just hit the town between the romantic and the fashionable; and between the two, secured all classes of readers on his side. In a word, I conceive that he is to the great poet, what an excellent mimic is to a great actor. There is no determinate impression left on the mind by reading his poetry. It has no results. The reader rises up from the perusal with new images and associations, but he remains the same man that he was before. A great mind is one that moulds the minds of others. Mr. Scott has put the Border Minstrelsy and scattered traditions of the country into easy, animated verse. But the Notes to his poems are just as entertaining as the poems themselves, and his poems are only entertaining.

Mr. Wordsworth is the most original poet now living. He is the reverse of Walter Scott in his defects and excellences. He has nearly all that the other wants, and wants all that the other possesses. His poetry is not external, but internal; it does not depend upon tradition, or story, or old song; he furnishes it from his own mind, and is his own subject. He is the poet of mere sentiment. Of many of the Lyrical Ballads, it is not possible to speak in terms of too high praise, such as Hart-leap Well, the Banks of the Wye, Poor Susan, parts of the Leech-gatherer, the lines to a Cuckoo, to a Daisy, the Complaint, several of the Sonnets, and a hundred others of inconceivable beauty, of perfect originality and pathos. They open a finer and deeper vein of thought and feeling than any poet in modern times has done, or attempted. He has produced a deeper impression, and on a smaller circle, than any other of his contemporaries. His powers have been mistaken by the age, nor does he exactly understand them himself. He cannot form a whole. He has not the constructive faculty. He can give only the fine tones of thought, drawn from his mind by accident or nature, like the sounds drawn from the Æolian harp by the wandering gale.—He is totally deficient in all the machinery of poetry. His *Excursion*, taken as a whole, notwithstanding the noble materials thrown away in it, is a proof of this. The line labours, the sentiment moves slow, but the poem stands stock-still. The reader makes no way from the first line to the last. It is more than any thing in the world like Robinson Crusoe's boat, which would have been an excellent good boat, and would have carried him to the other side of the globe, but that he could not get it out of the sand where it stuck fast. I did what little I could to help to launch it at the time, but it would not do. I am not, however, one of those who laugh at the attempts or failures of men of genius. It is not my way to cry 'Long life to the conqueror.' Success and desert are not with me synonymous terms; and the less Mr. Wordsworth's general merits have been understood, the more necessary is it to insist upon them. This is not the place to repeat what I have already said on the subject. The reader may turn to it in the Round Table. I do not think, however, there is any thing in the larger poem equal to many of the detached pieces in the Lyrical Ballads. As Mr. Wordsworth's poems have been little known to the public, or chiefly through garbled extracts from them, I will here give an entire poem (one that has always been a favourite with me), that the reader may know what it is that the admirers of this author find to be delighted with in his poetry. Those who do not feel the beauty and the force of it, may save themselves the trouble of inquiring farther.

HART-LEAP WELL

'The knight had ridden down from Wensley moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud;
He turned aside towards a vassal's door,
And, "Bring another horse!" he cried aloud.

"Another horse!"—That shout the vassal heard,
And saddled his best steed, a comely gray;
Sir Walter mounted him; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes:
The horse and horseman are a happy pair;
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's hall,
That as they galloped made the echoes roar;
But horse and man are vanished, one and all;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain:
Brach, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The knight hallooed, he chid and cheered them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern;
But breath and eye-sight fail; and, one by one,
The dogs are stretched among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown?
—This chase it looks not like an earthly chase;
Sir Walter and the hart are left alone.

The poor hart toils along the mountain side;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died;
But now the knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting then, he leaned against a thorn;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy:
He neither smacked his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious act;
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned;
And foaming like a mountain cataract.

Upon his side the hart was lying stretched:
His nose half-touched a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had fetched
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
(Was never man in such a joyful case!)
Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and west,
And gazed, and gazed upon that darling place.

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least
Nine roods of sheer ascent) Sir Walter found,
Three several hoof-marks which the hunted beast
Had left imprinted on the verdant ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face and cried, "Till now
Such sight was never seen by living eyes:
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow,
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

I'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small arbour, made for rural joy;
'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

A cunning artist will I have to frame
A bason for that fountain in the dell;
And they, who do make mention of the same
From this day forth, shall call it HART-LEAP WELL.

And, gallant brute! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be raised;
Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.

And, in the summer-time when days are long,
I will come hither with my paramour;
And with the dancers, and the minstrel's song,
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

Till the foundations of the mountains fail,
My mansion with its arbour shall endure;—
The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure!"

Then home he went, and left the hart, stone-dead,
With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring.
—Soon did the knight perform what he had said,
And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.

Ere thrice the moon into her port had steered,
   A cup of stone received the living well;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,
   And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
   With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,–
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
   A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer-days were long,
   Sir Walter journeyed with his paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
   Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
   And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
   And I to this would add another tale.'

PART SECOND

'The moving accident is not my trade:
   To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
   To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
   It chanced that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspens at three corners of a square,
   And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine:
   And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,
   The last stone pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were gray, with neither arms nor head;
   Half-wasted the square mound of tawny green;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
   "Here in old time the hand of man hath been."

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
   More doleful place did never eye survey;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
   And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
   When one, who was in shepherd's garb attired,
Came up the hollow:—Him did I accost,
   And what this place might be I then inquired.

The shepherd stopped, and that same story told
  Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.
"A jolly place," said he, "in times of old!
  But something ails it now; the spot is curst.

You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—
  Some say that they are beeches, others elms—
These were the bower; and here a mansion stood,
  The finest palace of a hundred realms!

The arbour does its own condition tell;
  You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream;
But as to the great lodge! you might as well
  Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
  Will wet his lips within that cup of stone;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
  This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

Some say that here a murder has been done,
  And blood cries out for blood: but, for my part,
I've guessed, when I've been sitting in the sun,
  That it was all for that unhappy hart.

What thoughts must through the creature's brain have passed!
  Even from the top-most stone, upon the steep,
Are but three bounds—and look, Sir, at this last—
  —O Master! it has been a cruel leap.

For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race;
  And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the hart might have to love this place,
  And come and make his death-bed near the well.

Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
  Lulled by this fountain in the summer-tide;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
  When he had wandered from his mother's side.

In April here beneath the scented thorn
  He heard the birds their morning carols sing;
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
  Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

But now here's neither grass nor pleasant shade;
  The sun on drearier hollow never shone;
So will it be, as I have often said,
  Till trees, and stones, and fountain all are gone.'

'Gray-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine:
This beast not unobserved by Nature fell;
His death was mourned by sympathy divine.

The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep, and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

The pleasure-house is dust:—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known;
But at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shews, and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.'

Mr. Wordsworth is at the head of that which has been denominated the Lake school of poetry; a school which, with all my respect for it, I do not think sacred from criticism or exempt from faults, of some of which faults I shall speak with becoming frankness; for I do not see that the liberty of the press ought to be shackled, or freedom of speech curtailed, to screen either its revolutionary or renegado extravagances. This school of poetry had its origin in the French revolution, or rather in those sentiments and opinions which produced that revolution; and which sentiments and opinions were indirectly imported into this country in translations from the German about that period. Our poetical literature had, towards the close of the last century, degenerated into the most trite, insipid, and mechanical of all things, in the hands of the followers of Pope and the old French school of poetry. It wanted something to stir it up, and it found that something in the principles and events of the French revolution. From the impulse it thus received, it rose at once from the most servile imitation and tamest common-place, to the utmost pitch of singularity and paradox. The change in the belles-lettres was as complete, and to many persons as startling, as the change in politics, with which it went hand in hand. There was a mighty ferment in the heads of statesmen and poets, kings and people. According to the prevailing notions, all was to be natural and new. Nothing that was established

was to be tolerated. All the common-place figures of poetry, tropes, allegories, personifications, with the whole heathen mythology, were instantly discarded; a classical allusion was considered as a piece of antiquated foppery; capital letters were no more allowed in print, than letters-patent of nobility were permitted in real life; kings and queens were dethroned from their rank and station in legitimate tragedy or epic poetry, as they were decapitated elsewhere; rhyme was looked upon as a relic of the feudal system, and regular metre was abolished along with regular government. Authority and fashion, elegance or arrangement, were hooted out of countenance, as pedantry and prejudice. Every one did that which was good in his own eyes. The object was to reduce all things to an absolute level; and a singularly affected and outrageous simplicity prevailed in dress and manners, in style and sentiment. A striking effect produced where it was least expected, something new and original, no matter whether good, bad, or indifferent, whether mean or lofty, extravagant or childish, was all that was aimed at, or considered as compatible with sound philosophy and an age of reason. The licentiousness grew extreme: Coryate's Crudities were nothing to it. The world was to be turned topsy-turvy; and poetry, by the good will of our Adam-wits, was to share its fate and begin *de novo*. It was a time of promise, a renewal of the world and of letters; and the Deucalions, who were to perform this feat of regeneration, were the present poet-laureat and the two authors of the Lyrical Ballads. The Germans, who made heroes of robbers, and honest women of cast-off mistresses, had already exhausted the extravagant and marvellous in sentiment and situation: our native writers adopted a wonderful simplicity of style and matter. The paradox they set out with was, that all things are by nature equally fit subjects for poetry; or that if there is any preference to be given, those that are the meanest and most unpromising are the best, as they leave the greatest scope for the unbounded stores of thought and fancy in the writer's own mind. Poetry had with them 'neither buttress nor coigne of vantage to make its pendant bed and procreant cradle.' It was not 'born so high: its aiery buildeth in the cedar's top, and dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun.' It grew like a mushroom out of the ground; or was hidden in it like a truffle, which it required a particular sagacity and industry to find out and dig up. They founded the new school on a principle of sheer humanity, on pure nature void of art. It could not be said of these sweeping reformers and dictators in the republic of letters, that 'in their train walked crowns and crownets; that realms and islands, like plates, dropt from their pockets': but they were surrounded, in company with the Muses, by a mixed rabble of idle

apprentices and Botany Bay convicts, female vagrants, gipsies, meek daughters in the family of Christ, of ideot boys and mad mothers, and after them 'owls and night-ravens flew.' They scorned 'degrees, priority, and place, insisture, course, proportion, season, form, office, and custom in all line of order':—the distinctions of birth, the vicissitudes of fortune, did not enter into their abstracted, lofty, and levelling calculation of human nature. He who was more than man, with them was none. They claimed kindred only with the commonest of the people: peasants, pedlars, and village-barbers were their oracles and bosom friends. Their poetry, in the extreme to which it professedly tended, and was in effect carried, levels all distinctions of nature and society; has 'no figures nor no fantasies,' which the prejudices of superstition or the customs of the world draw in the brains of men; 'no trivial fond records' of all that has existed in the history of past ages; it has no adventitious pride, pomp, or circumstance, to set it off; 'the marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe'; neither tradition, reverence, nor ceremony, 'that to great ones 'longs': it breaks in pieces the golden images of poetry, and defaces its armorial bearings, to melt them down in the mould of common humanity or of its own upstart self-sufficiency. They took the same method in their new-fangled 'metre ballad-mongering' scheme, which Rousseau did in his prose paradoxes—of exciting attention by reversing the established standards of opinion and estimation in the world. They were for bringing poetry back to its primitive simplicity and state of nature, as he was for bringing society back to the savage state: so that the only thing remarkable left in the world by this change, would be the persons who had produced it. A thorough adept in this school of poetry and philanthropy is jealous of all excellence but his own. He does not even like to share his reputation with his subject; for he would have it all proceed from his own power and originality of mind. Such a one is slow to admire any thing that is admirable; feels no interest in what is most interesting to others, no grandeur in any thing grand, no beauty in anything beautiful. He tolerates only what he himself creates; he sympathizes only with what can enter into no competition with him, with 'the bare trees and mountains bare, and grass in the green field.' He sees nothing but himself and the universe. He hates all greatness and all pretensions to it, whether well or ill-founded. His egotism is in some respects a madness; for he scorns even the admiration of himself, thinking it a presumption in any one to suppose that he has taste or sense enough to understand him. He hates all science and all art; he hates chemistry, he hates conchology; he hates Voltaire; he hates Sir Isaac Newton; he

hates wisdom; he hates wit; he hates metaphysics, which he says are unintelligible, and yet he would be thought to understand them; he hates prose; he hates all poetry but his own; he hates the dialogues in Shakespeare; he hates music, dancing, and painting; he hates Rubens, he hates Rembrandt; he hates Raphael, he hates Titian; he hates Vandyke; he hates the antique; he hates the Apollo Belvidere; he hates the Venus of Medicis. This is the reason that so few people take an interest in his writings, because he takes an interest in nothing that others do!—The effect has been perceived as something odd; but the cause or principle has never been distinctly traced to its source before, as far as I know. The proofs are to be found every where—in Mr. Southey's Botany Bay Eclogues, in his book of Songs and Sonnets, his Odes and Inscriptions, so well parodied in the Anti-Jacobin Review, in his Joan of Arc, and last, though not least, in his Wat Tyler:

> 'When Adam delved, and Eve span,
> Where was then the gentleman?'

(—or the poet laureat either, we may ask?)—In Mr. Coleridge's Ode to an Ass's Foal, in his Lines to Sarah, his Religious Musings; and in his and Mr. Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads, *passim*.

Of Mr. Southey's larger epics, I have but a faint recollection at this distance of time, but all that I remember of them is mechanical and extravagant, heavy and superficial. His affected, disjointed style is well imitated in the Rejected Addresses. The difference between him and Sir Richard Blackmore seems to be, that the one is heavy and the other light, the one solemn and the other pragmatical, the one phlegmatic and the other flippant; and that there is no Gay in the present time to give a Catalogue Raisonné of the performances of the living undertaker of epics. Kehama is a loose sprawling figure, such as we see cut out of wood or paper, and pulled or jerked with wire or thread, to make sudden and surprising motions, without meaning, grace, or nature in them. By far the best of his works are some of his shorter personal compositions, in which there is an ironical mixture of the quaint and serious, such as his lines on a picture of Gaspar Poussin, the fine tale of Gualberto, his Description of a Pig, and the Holly-tree, which is an affecting, beautiful, and modest retrospect on his own character. May the aspiration with which it concludes be fulfilled! [1]—But the little he has done of true

[1] 'O reader! hast thou ever stood to see
    The Holly Tree?
The eye that contemplates it well perceives
    Its glossy leaves,

and sterling excellence, is overloaded by the quantity of indifferent matter which he turns out every year, 'prosing or versing,' with equally mechanical and irresistible facility. His Essays, or political and moral disquisitions, are not so full of original matter as Montaigne's. They are second or third rate compositions in that class.

It remains that I should say a few words of Mr. Coleridge; and there is no one who has a better right to say what he thinks of him

Ordered by an intelligence so wise
As might confound the Atheist's sophistries.

Below, a circling fence, its leaves are seen
        Wrinkled and keen;
No grazing cattle through their prickly round
        Can reach to wound;
But as they grow where nothing is to fear,
Smooth and unarm'd the pointless leaves appear.

I love to view these things with curious eyes,
        And moralize;
And in the wisdom of the Holly Tree
        Can emblems see
Wherewith perchance to make a pleasant rhyme,
Such as may profit in the after time.

So, though abroad perchance I might appear
        Harsh and austere,
To those who on my leisure would intrude
        Reserved and rude,
Gentle at home amid my friends I 'd be,
Like the high leaves upon the Holly Tree.

And should my youth, as youth is apt I know,
        Some harshness show,
All vain asperities I day by day
        Would wear away,
Till the smooth temper of my age should be
Like the high leaves upon the Holly Tree.

And as when all the summer trees are seen
        So bright and green,
The Holly leaves their fadeless hues display
        Less bright than they,
But when the bare and wintry woods we see,
What then so cheerful as the Holly Tree?

So serious should my youth appear among
        The thoughtless throng,
So would I seem amid the young and gay
        More grave than they,
That in my age as cheerful I might be
As the green winter of the Holly Tree.'—

than I have. 'Is there here any dear friend of Cæsar? To him I say, that Brutus's love to Cæsar was no less than his.' But no matter.—His Ancient Mariner is his most remarkable performance, and the only one that I could point out to any one as giving an adequate idea of his great natural powers. It is high German, however, and in it he seems to 'conceive of poetry but as a drunken dream, reckless, careless, and heedless, of past, present, and to come.' His tragedies (for he has written two) are not answerable to it; they are, except a few poetical passages, drawling sentiment and metaphysical jargon. He has no genuine dramatic talent. There is one fine passage in his Christabel, that which contains the description of the quarrel between Sir Leoline and Sir Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine, who had been friends in youth.

> 'Alas! they had been friends in youth,
> But whispering tongues can poison truth;
> And constancy lives in realms above;
> And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
> And to be wroth with one we love,
> Doth work like madness in the brain:
> And thus it chanc'd as I divine,
> With Roland and Sir Leoline.
> Each spake words of high disdain
> And insult to his heart's best brother,
> And parted ne'er to meet again!
> But neither ever found another
> To free the hollow heart from paining—
>
> They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
> Like cliffs which had been rent asunder:
> A dreary sea now flows between,
> But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
> Shall wholly do away I ween
> The marks of that which once hath been.
>
> Sir Leoline a moment's space
> Stood gazing on the damsel's face;
> And the youthful lord of Tryermaine
> Came back upon his heart again.'

It might seem insidious if I were to praise his ode entitled Fire, Famine, and Slaughter, as an effusion of high poetical enthusiasm, and strong political feeling. His Sonnet to Schiller conveys a fine compliment to the author of the Robbers, and an equally fine idea of the state of youthful enthusiasm in which he composed it.

'Schiller! that hour I would have wish'd to die,
If through the shudd'ring midnight I had sent
From the dark dungeon of the tower time-rent,
That fearful voice, a famish'd father's cry—

That in no after moment aught less vast
Might stamp me mortal! A triumphant shout
Black Horror scream'd, and all her goblin rout
From the more with'ring scene diminish'd pass'd.

Ah! Bard tremendous in sublimity!
Could I behold thee in thy loftier mood,
Wand'ring at eve, with finely frenzied eye,
Beneath some vast old tempest-swinging wood!
Awhile, with mute awe gazing, I would brood,
Then weep aloud in a wild ecstacy!'—

His *Conciones ad Populum*, Watchman, &c. are dreary trash. Of his Friend, I have spoken the truth elsewhere. But I may say of him here, that he is the only person I ever knew who answered to the idea of a man of genius. He is the only person from whom I ever learnt any thing. There is only one thing he could learn from me in return, but *that* he has not. He was the first poet I ever knew. His genius at that time had angelic wings, and fed on manna. He talked on for ever; and you wished him to talk on for ever. His thoughts did not seem to come with labour and effort; but as if borne on the gusts of genius, and as if the wings of his imagination lifted him from off his feet. His voice rolled on the ear like the pealing organ, and its sound alone was the music of thought. His mind was clothed with wings; and raised on them, he lifted philosophy to heaven. In his descriptions, you then saw the progress of human happiness and liberty in bright and never-ending succession, like the steps of Jacob's ladder, with airy shapes ascending and descending, and with the voice of God at the top of the ladder. And shall I, who heard him then, listen to him now? Not I! . . . . That spell is broke; that time is gone for ever; that voice is heard no more: but still the recollection comes rushing by with thoughts of long-past years, and rings in my ears with never-dying sound.

'What though the radiance which was once so bright,
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of glory in the grass, of splendour in the flow'r;
I do not grieve, but rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy,

Which having been, must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In years that bring the philosophic mind!'—

I have thus gone through the task I intended, and have come at last to the level ground. I have felt my subject gradually sinking from under me as I advanced, and have been afraid of ending in nothing. The interest has unavoidably decreased at almost every successive step of the progress, like a play that has its catastrophe in the first or second act. This, however, I could not help. I have done as well as I could.

THE END.

A VIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE

OR

A SERIES OF DRAMATIC CRITICISMS

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Published in 1818 in one 8vo volume, with the following title-page: 'A View of the English Stage; or, a Series of Dramatic Criticisms. By William Hazlitt. "For I am nothing if not critical." London: Printed for Robert Stodart, 81, Strand; Anderson and Chase, 40, West Smithfield; and Bell and Bradfute, Edinburgh. 1818.' The volume was printed by B. M'Millan, Bow Street, Covent Garden. The work was re-issued in 1821 with a fresh half-title, 'Dramatic Criticisms,' and a fresh title-page bearing the imprint: 'London: John Warren, Old Bond-Street. MDCCCXXI.' The so-called 'second edition,' published by the author's son in 1851 under the title of 'Criticisms and Dramatic Essays, of the English Stage,' contains only a selection from the essays published in *A View of the English Stage.* The present edition is reprinted from that of 1818, with the addition of a Table of Contents; also, for the sake of convenience, the name and the date of the journal from which the essay is taken are printed at the beginning of each essay. Hazlitt himself gave the dates (sometimes inaccurately), but not the names of the journals; where called for he gave the name of the theatre at the head of an essay, and his practice in this respect is followed.

CONTENTS

A VIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE

PREFACE

THE Stage is one great source of public amusement, not to say instruction. A good play, well acted, passes away a whole evening delightfully at a certain period of life, agreeably at all times; we read the account of it next morning with pleasure, and it generally furnishes one leading topic of conversation for the afternoon. The disputes on the merits or defects of the last new piece, or of a favourite performer, are as common, as frequently renewed, and carried on with as much eagerness and skill, as those on almost any other subject. Rochefoucault, I believe, it was, who said that the reason why lovers were so fond of one another's company was, that they were always talking about themselves. The same reason almost might be given for the interest we feel in talking about plays and players; they are 'the brief chronicles of the time,' the epitome of human life and manners. While we are talking about them, we are thinking about ourselves. They 'hold the mirror up to Nature'; and our thoughts are turned to the Stage as naturally and as fondly as a fine lady turns to contemplate her face in the glass. It is a glass too, in which the wise may see themselves; but in which the vain and superficial see their own virtues, and laugh at the follies of others. The curiosity which every one has to know how his voice and manner can be mimicked, must have been remarked or felt by most of us. It is no wonder then, that we should feel the same sort of curiosity and interest, in seeing those whose business it is to 'imitate humanity' in general, and who do it sometimes 'abominably,' at other times admirably. Of these, some record is due to the world; but the player's art is one that perishes with him, and leaves no traces of itself, but in the faint descriptions of the pen or pencil. Yet how eagerly do we stop to look at the prints from Zoffany's pictures of Garrick and Weston! How much we are vexed, that so much of Colley Cibber's Life is taken up with the accounts of his own managership, and so little with those inimitable portraits which he has occasionally given of the actors of his time! How fortunate we think ourselves, when we can meet with any person who remembers the principal performers of the last age, and who can give us some

distant idea of Garrick's nature, or of an Abington's grace! We are always indignant at Smollett, for having introduced a perverse caricature of the English Roscius, which staggers our faith in his faultless excellence while reading it. On the contrary, we are pleased to collect anecdotes of this celebrated actor, which shew his power over the human heart, and enable us to measure his genius with that of others by its effects. I have heard, for instance, that once, when Garrick was acting Lear, the spectators in the front row of the pit, not being able to see him well in the kneeling scene, where he utters the curse, rose up, when those behind them, not willing to interrupt the scene by remonstrating, immediately rose up too, and in this manner, the whole pit rose up, without uttering a syllable, and so that you might hear a pin drop. At another time, the crown of straw which he wore in the same character fell off, or was discomposed, which would have produced a burst of laughter at any common actor to whom such an accident had happened; but such was the deep interest in the character, and such the power of rivetting the attention possessed by this actor, that not the slightest notice was taken of the circumstance, but the whole audience remained bathed in silent tears. The knowledge of circumstances like these, serves to keep alive the memory of past excellence, and to stimulate future efforts. It was thought that a work containing a detailed account of the Stage in our own times—a period not unfruitful in theatrical genius—might not be wholly without its use.

The volume here offered to the public, is a collection of Theatrica Criticisms which have appeared with little interruption, during the last four years, in different newspapers—the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Champion*, the *Examiner*, and lastly, the *Times*. How I came to be regularly transferred from one of these papers to the other, sometimes formally and sometimes without ceremony, till I was forced to quit the last-mentioned by want of health and leisure, would make rather an amusing story, but that I do not chuse to tell 'the secrets of the prison-house.' I would, however, advise any one who has an ambition to write, and to write *his best*, in the periodical press, to get if possible 'a situation' in the *Times* newspaper, the Editor of which is a man of business, and not of letters. He may write there as long and as good articles as he can, without being turned out for it,—unless he should be too prolix on the subject of the Bourbons, and in that case he may set up an opposition paper on his own account—as 'one who loved not wisely but too well.'

The first, and (as I think) the best articles in this series, appeared originally in the *Morning Chronicle*. They are those relating to Mr. Kean. I went to see him the first night of his appearing in

Shylock. I remember it well. The boxes were empty, and the pit not half full: 'some quantity of barren spectators and idle renters were thinly scattered to make up a show.' The whole presented a dreary, hopeless aspect. I was in considerable apprehension for the result. From the first scene in which Mr. Kean came on, my doubts were at an end. I had been told to give as favourable an account as I could: I gave a true one. I am not one of those who, when they see the sun breaking from behind a cloud, stop to ask others whether it is the moon. Mr. Kean's appearance was the first gleam of genius breaking athwart the gloom of the Stage, and the public have since gladly basked in its ray, in spite of actors, managers, and critics. I cannot say that my opinion has much changed since that time. Why should it? I had the same eyes to see with that I have now, the same ears to hear with, and the same understanding to judge with. Why then should I not form the same judgment? My opinions have been sometimes called singular: they are merely sincere. I say what I think: I think what I feel. I cannot help receiving certain impressions from things; and I have sufficient courage to declare (somewhat abruptly) what they are. This is the only singularity I am conscious of. I do not shut my eyes to extraordinary merit because I hate it, and refuse to open them till the clamours of others make me, and then affect to wonder extravagantly at what I have before affected hypocritically to despise. I do not make it a common practice, to think nothing of an actor or an author, because all the world have not pronounced in his favour, and after they have, to persist in condemning him, as a proof not of imbecility and ill-nature, but of independence of taste and spirit. Nor do I endeavour to communicate the infection of my own dulness, cowardice, and spleen to others, by chilling the coldness of their constitutions by the poisonous slime of vanity or interest, and setting up my own conscious inability or unwillingness to form an opinion on any one subject, as the height of candour and judgment.—I did not endeavour to persuade Mr. Perry that Mr. Kean was an actor that would not last, merely because he had not lasted; nor that Miss Stephens knew nothing of singing, because she had a sweet voice. On the contrary, I did all I could to counteract the effect of these safe, not very sound, insinuations, and 'screw the courage' of one principal organ of public opinion 'to the sticking-place.' I do not repent of having done so.

With respect to the spirit of partisanship in which the controversy respecting Mr. Kean's merits as an actor was carried on, there were two or three things remarkable. One set of persons, out of the excess of their unbounded admiration, furnished him with all sorts of

excellences which he did not possess or pretend to, and covered his defects from the wardrobe of their own fancies. With this class of persons,

'Pritchard's genteel, and Garrick's six feet high!'

I never enlisted in this corps of Swiss bodyguards; I was even suspected of disloyalty and *leze-majesté*, because I did not cry out—*Quand meme!*—to all Mr. Kean's stretches of the prerogatives of genius, and was placed out of the pale of theatrical orthodoxy, for not subscribing implicitly to all the articles of belief imposed upon my senses and understanding. If you had not been to see the little man twenty times in Richard, and did not deny his being hoarse in the last act, or admire him for being so, you were looked on as a luke-warm devotee, or half an infidel. On the other hand, his detractors constantly argued not from what he was, but from what he was not. 'He was not tall. He had not a fine voice. He did not play at Covent-Garden. He was not John Kemble.' This was all you could get from them, and this they thought quite sufficient to prove that he was not any thing, because he was not something quite different from himself. They did not consider that an actor might have the eye of an eagle with the voice of a raven, a 'pigmy body,' and 'a fiery soul that o'er-informed its tenement'; that he might want grace and dignity, and yet have enough nature and passion in his breast to set up a whole corps of regular stagers. They did not enquire whether this was the case with respect to Mr. Kean, but took it for granted that it was not, for no other reason, than because the question had not been settled by the critics twenty or thirty years ago, and admitted by the town ever since, that is, before Mr. Kean was born. A royal infant may be described as 'un haut et puissant prince, agé d'un jour,'[1] but a great and powerful actor cannot be known till he arrives at years of discretion, and he must be first a candidate for theatrical reputation before he can be a veteran. This is a truism, but it is one that our prejudices constantly make us not only forget, but frequently combat with all the spirit of martyrdom. I have (as it will be seen in the following pages) all along spoken freely of Mr. Kean's faults, or what I considered such, physical as well as intellectual; but the balance inclines decidedly to the favourable side, though not more I think than his merits exceed his defects. It was also the more necessary to dwell on the claims of an actor to public support, in proportion as they were original, and to the illiberal opposition they unhappily had to encounter. I endeavoured to prove

[1] See the Fudge Family, edited by Thomas Brown, jun.

(and with some success), that he was not 'the very worst actor in the world.' His Othello is what appears to me his master-piece. To those who have seen him in this part, and think little of it, I have nothing farther to say. It seems to me, as far as the mind alone is concerned, and leaving the body out of the question, fully equal to any thing of Mrs. Siddons's. But I hate such comparisons; and only make them on strong provocation.

Though I do not repent of what I have said in praise of certain actors, yet I wish I could retract what I have been obliged to say in reprobation of others. Public reputation is a lottery, in which there are blanks as well as prizes. The Stage is an arduous profession, requiring so many essential excellences and accidental advantages, that though it is an honour and a happiness to succeed in it, it is only a misfortune, and not a disgrace, to fail in it. Those who put themselves upon their trial, must, however, submit to the verdict; and the critic in general does little more than prevent a lingering death, by anticipating, or putting in immediate force, the sentence of the public. The victims of criticism, like the victims of the law, bear no good will to their executioners; and I confess I have often been heartily tired of so thankless an office. What I have said of any actor, has never arisen from private pique of any sort. Indeed the only person on the stage with whom I have ever had any personal intercourse, is Mr. Liston, and of him I have not spoken 'with the malice of a friend.' To Mr. Conway and Mr. Bartley my apologies are particularly due: I have accused the one of being tall, and the other of being fat. I have also said that Mr. Young plays not only like a scholar, but like 'a master of scholars'; that Miss O'Neill shines more in tragedy than comedy; and that Mr. Mathews is an excellent mimic. I am sorry for these disclosures, which were extorted from me, but I cannot retract them. There is one observation which has been made, and which is true, that public censure hurts actors in a pecuniary point of view; but it has been forgotten, that public praise assists them in the same manner. Again, I never understood that the applauded actor thought himself personally obliged to the newspaper critic; the latter was merely supposed to do his duty. Why then should the critic be held responsible to the actor whom he *damns* by virtue of his office? Besides, as the mimic caricatures absurdity off the Stage, why should not the critic sometimes caricature it on the Stage? The children of Momus should not hold themselves sacred from ridicule. Though the colours may be a little heightened, the outline may be correct; and truth may be conveyed, and the public taste improved, by an alliteration or a quibble that wounds the self-love of an individual. Authors must

live as well as actors; and the *insipid* must at all events be avoided as that which the public abhors most.

I am not aware of any thing necessary to be added to this Preface, but to apologize for some repetitions to be found in the work; I mean some passages and criticisms that have been transferred to other publications, such as the account of the Beggar's Opera, Coriolanus, &c. In fact, I have come to this determination in my own mind, that a work is as good as *manuscript*, and is invested with all the same privileges, till it appears in a second edition—a rule which leaves me at liberty to make what use I please of what I have hitherto written, with the single exception of THE CHARACTERS OF SHAKESPEAR'S PLAYS.

W. HAZLITT.

April 24, 1818.

A VIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE

MR. KEAN'S SHYLOCK

The Morning Chronicle. *January* 27, 1814.

Mr. Kean (of whom report had spoken highly) last night made his appearance at Drury-Lane Theatre in the character of Shylock. For voice, eye, action, and expression, no actor has come out for many years at all equal to him. The applause, from the first scene to the last, was general, loud, and uninterrupted. Indeed, the very first scene in which he comes on with Bassanio and Antonio, shewed the master in his art, and at once decided the opinion of the audience. Perhaps it was the most perfect of any. Notwithstanding the complete success of Mr. Kean in the part of Shylock, we question whether he will not become a greater favourite in other parts. There was a lightness and vigour in his tread, a buoyancy and elasticity of spirit, a fire and animation, which would accord better with almost any other character than with the morose, sullen, inward, inveterate, inflexible malignity of Shylock. The character of Shylock is that of a man brooding over one idea, that of its wrongs, and bent on one unalterable purpose, that of revenge. In conveying a profound impression of this feeling, or in embodying the general conception of rigid and uncontroulable self-will, equally proof against every sentiment of humanity or prejudice of opinion, we have seen actors more successful than Mr. Kean; but in giving effect to the conflict of passions arising out of the contrasts of situation, in varied vehemence of declamation, in keenness of sarcasm, in the rapidity of his transitions from one tone and feeling to another, in propriety and novelty of action, presenting a succession of striking pictures, and giving perpetually fresh shocks of delight and surprise, it would be difficult to single out a competitor. The fault of his acting was (if we may hazard the objection), an over-display of the resources of the art, which gave too much relief to the hard, impenetrable, dark groundwork of the character of Shylock. It would be endless to point out individual beauties, where almost every passage was received with equal and deserved applause. We thought, in one or two instances,

the pauses in the voice were too long, and too great a reliance placed on the expression of the countenance, which is a language intelligible only to a part of the house.

The rest of the play was, upon the whole, very respectably cast. It would be an equivocal compliment to say of Miss Smith, that her acting often reminds us of Mrs. Siddons. Rae played Bassanio; but the abrupt and harsh tones of his voice are not well adapted to the mellifluous cadences of Shakespear's verse.

The Morning Chronicle. *February* 2, 1814.

Mr. Kean appeared again in Shylock, and by his admirable and expressive manner of giving the part, fully sustained the reputation he had acquired by his former representation of it, though he laboured under the disadvantage of a considerable hoarseness. He assumed a greater appearance of age and feebleness than on the first night, but the general merit of his playing was the same. His style of acting is, if we may use the expression, more significant, more pregnant with meaning, more varied and alive in every part, than any we have almost ever witnessed. The character never stands still; there is no vacant pause in the action; the eye is never silent. For depth and force of conception, we have seen actors whom we should prefer to Mr. Kean in Shylock; for brilliant and masterly execution, none. It is not saying too much of him, though it is saying a great deal, that he has all that Mr. Kemble *wants* ot perfection. He reminds us of the descriptions of the 'far-darting eye' of Garrick. We are anxious to see him in Norval and Richard, and anticipate more complete satisfaction from his performance of the latter part, than from the one in which he has already stamped his reputation with the public

Miss Smith played Portia with much more animation than the last time we saw her, and in delivering the fine apostrophe on Mercy, in the trial-scene, was highly impressive.

MR. KEAN'S RICHARD

The Morning Chronicle. *February*, 15, 1814.

Mr. Kean's manner of acting this part has one peculiar advantage; it is entirely his own, without any traces of imitation of any other actor. He stands upon his own ground, and he stands firm upon it. Almost every scene had the stamp and freshness of nature. The excellences and defects of his performance were in general the same

as those which he discovered in Shylock; though, as the character of Richard is the most difficult, so we think he displayed most power in it. It is possible to form a higher conception of this character (we do not mean from seeing other actors, but from reading Shakespear) than that given by this very admirable tragedian; but we cannot imagine any character represented with greater distinctness and precision, more perfectly *articulated* in every part. Perhaps, indeed, there is too much of this; for we sometimes thought he failed, even from an exuberance of talent, and dissipated the impression of the character by the variety of his resources. To be perfect, it should have a little more solidity, depth, sustained, and impassioned feeling, with somewhat less brilliancy, with fewer glancing lights, pointed transitions, and pantomimic evolutions.

The Richard of Shakespear is towering and lofty, as well as aspiring; equally impetuous and commanding; haughty, violent, and subtle; bold and treacherous; confident in his strength, as well as in his cunning; raised high by his birth, and higher by his genius and his crimes; a royal usurper, a princely hypocrite, a tyrant, and a murderer of the House of Plantagenet.

> 'But I was born so high;
> Our airy buildeth in the cedar's top,
> And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun.'

The idea conveyed in these lines (which are omitted in the miserable medley acted for Richard III.) is never lost sight of by Shakespear, and should not be out of the actor's mind for a moment. The restless and sanguinary Richard is not a man striving to be great, but to be greater than he is; conscious of his strength of will, his powers of intellect, his daring courage, his elevated station, and making use of these advantages, as giving him both the means and the pretext to commit unheard-of crimes, and to shield himself from remorse and infamy.

If Mr. Kean does not completely succeed in concentrating all the lines of the character, as drawn by Shakespear, he gives an animation, vigour, and relief to the part, which we have never seen surpassed. He is more refined than Cooke; more bold, varied, and original than Kemble, in the same character. In some parts, however, we thought him deficient in dignity; and particularly in the scenes of state business, there was not a sufficient air of artificial authority. The fine assumption of condescending superiority, after he is made king—'Stand all apart—Cousin of Buckingham,' &c. was not given with the effect which it might have received. There was also at times, a sort of tip-toe elevation, an enthusiastic rapture in his expecta-

tions of obtaining the crown, instead of a gloating expression of sullen delight, as if he already clutched the bauble, and held it within his grasp. This was the precise expression which Mr. Kean gave with so much effect to the part where he says, that he already feels

'The golden rigol bind his brows.'

In one who *dares* so much, there is little indeed to blame. The only two things which appeared to us decidedly objectionable, were the sudden letting down of his voice when he says of Hastings, 'chop off his head,' and the action of putting his hands behind him, in listening to Buckingham's account of his reception by the citizens. His courtship scene with Lady Anne was an admirable exhibition of smooth and smiling villainy. The progress of wily adulation, of encroaching humility, was finely marked throughout by the action, voice, and eye. He seemed, like the first tempter, to approach his prey, certain of the event, and as if success had smoothed the way before him. We remember Mr. Cooke's manner of representing this scene was more violent, hurried, and full of anxious uncertainty. This, though more natural in general, was, we think, less in character. Richard should woo not as a lover, but as an actor—to shew his mental superiority, and power to make others the playthings of his will. Mr. Kean's attitude in leaning against the side of the stage before he comes forward in this scene, was one of the most graceful and striking we remember to have seen. It would have done for Titian to paint. The opening scene in which Richard descants on his own deformity, was conceived with perfect truth and character, and delivered in a fine and varied tone of natural recitation. Mr. Kean did equal justice to the beautiful description of the camps the night before the battle, though, in consequence of his hoarseness, he was obliged to repeat the whole passage in an under-key.[1] His manner of bidding his friends good night, and his pausing with the point of his sword, drawn slowly backward and forward on the ground, before he retires to his tent, received shouts of applause. He gave to all the busy scenes of the play the greatest animation and effect. He filled every part of the stage. The concluding scene, in which he is killed by Richmond, was the most brilliant. He fought like one drunk with wounds: and the attitude in which he stands with his hands stretched out, after his sword is taken from him, had a preternatural and terrific grandeur, as if his will could not be disarmed, and the very phantoms of his despair had a withering power.

[1] The defects in the upper tones of Mr. Kean's voice were hardly perceptible in his performance of Shylock, and were at first attributed to hoarseness.

The Morning Chronicle. *February* 21, 1814.

The house was crowded at an early hour in every part, to witness Mr. Kean's second representation of Richard. His admirable acting received that meed of applause, which it so well deserved. His voice had not entirely recovered its tone and strength; and when (after the curtain had dropped, amidst a tumult of approbation), Mr. Rae came forward to announce the play for Monday, cries of 'No, no,' from every part of the house, testified the sense entertained by the audience, of the impropriety of requiring the repetition of this extraordinary effort, till every physical disadvantage had been completely removed.

We have little to add to our former remarks, for Mr. Kean went through the part nearly as before, and we saw no reason to alter our opinion. The dying scene was the most varied, and, we think, for the worse. In pronouncing the words in Richard's soliloquy, 'I am myself alone,' Mr. Kean gave a quick and hurried movement to his voice, as if it was a thought that suddenly struck him, or which he wished to pass over; whereas it is the deep and rooted sentiment of his breast. The reduplication of the words in Shakespear points out the manner in which the voice should dwell upon, and as it were, brood over the feeling, loth to part with the bitter consolation. Where he says to Buckingham, 'I am not i' the vein,' the expression should, we imagine, be that of stifled hatred, and cold contempt, instead of sarcastic petulance. The scene tells for itself, without being pointed by the manner. In general, perhaps, if Mr. Kean were to give to the character less of the air of an ostentatious hypocrite, of an intelligible villain, it would be more correct, and would accord better with Shakespear's idea of the part. The description which he has put into the mouth of Hastings, is a perfect study for the actor.

> 'His grace looks cheerfully and smooth this morning:
> There 's some conceit or other likes him well,
> When that he bids good-morrow with such spirit.
> I think there 's ne'er a man in Christendom
> Can lesser hide his hate or love than he,
> For by his face straight shall you know his heart.'

In the scene with Lady Anne, in the sudden alteration of his manner to the messenger who brings him the news of Edward's illness, in the interview with Buckingham, where he desires the death of the children, in his infinitely spirited expostulation with Lord Stanley, in his triumph at the death of Buckingham, in the parting scene with his friends before the battle, in his treatment of the paper

sent to Norfolk, and in all the tumult and glowing interest of the last scenes of the play, we had fresh cause for admiration. It were in vain, however, to point out particular beauties; for the research, the ingenuity, and the invention manifested throughout the character are endless. We have said before, and we still think so, that there is even too much effect given, too many significant hints, too much appearance of study. There is a tone in acting, as well as in painting, which is the chief and master excellence. Our highest conception of an actor is, that he shall assume the character once for all, and be it throughout, and trust to this conscious sympathy for the effect produced. Mr. Kean's manner of acting is, on the contrary, rather a perpetual assumption of his part, always brilliant and successful, almost always true and natural, but yet always a distinct effort in every new situation, so that the actor does not seem entirely to forget himself, or to be identified with the character. The extreme elaboration of the parts injures the broad and massy effect; the general impulse of the machine is retarded by the variety and intricacy of the movements. But why do we try this actor by an ideal theory? Who is there that will stand the same test? It is, in fact, the last forlorn hope of criticism, for it shews that we have nothing else to compare him with. 'Take him for all in all,' it will be long, very long, before we 'look upon his like again,' if we are to wait as long as we *have* waited.

We wish the introduction of the ghosts through the trap-doors of the stage were altogether omitted. The speeches, which they address to Richard, might be delivered just as well from behind the scenes. These sort of exhibitions are only proper for a superstitious age; and in an age not superstitious, excite ridicule instead of terror. Mr. Wroughton makes a very substantial ghost, and Miss Boyce retains the same ruddy appearance of flesh and blood, and the same graceful *embonpoint*, which so well became her in the scene where she was wooed by Richard. Mrs. Glover's Queen was more natural and impressive than on the first night, because it was less turbulent; and if she would use still less vociferation, she would produce a still greater effect—'For in the very torrent and whirlwind of the passion, you should acquire a temperance that may give it smoothness.'

Mr. Kean's acting in Richard, as we before remarked in his Shylock, presents a perpetual succession of striking pictures. He bids fair to supply us with the best Shakespear Gallery we have had!

A VIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE

MR. KEAN'S HAMLET

The Morning Chronicle. *March* 14, 1814.

That which distinguishes the dramatic productions of Shakespear from all others, is the wonderful variety and perfect individuality of his characters. Each of these is as much itself, and as absolutely independent of the rest, as if they were living persons, not fictions of the mind. The poet appears for the time being, to be identified with the character he wishes to represent, and to pass from one to the other, like the same soul, successively animating different bodies. By an art like that of the ventriloquist, he throws his imagination out of himself, and makes every word appear to proceed from the very mouth of the person whose name it bears. His plays alone are properly expressions of the passions, not descriptions of them. His characters are real beings of flesh and blood; they speak like men, not like authors. One might suppose that he had stood by at the time, and had overheard what passed. Each object and circumstance seems to exist in his mind as it existed in nature; each several train of thought and feeling goes on of itself without effort or confusion; in the world of his imagination every thing has a life, a place and being of its own.

These remarks are, we think, as applicable to Hamlet, as to any of Shakespear's tragedies. It is, if not the finest, perhaps the most inimitable of all his productions. Lear is first, for the profound intensity of the passion: Macbeth, for the wildness of the imagination, and the glowing rapidity of the action: Othello, for the progressive interest, and rapid alternations of feeling: Hamlet, for perfect dramatic truth, and the unlooked-for development of sentiment and character. Shakespear has in this play shewn more of the magnanimity of genius, than in any other. There is no attempt to force an interest, but every thing is left to time and circumstances. The interest is excited without premeditation or effort, the events succeed each other as matters of course, the characters think, and speak and act just as they would do, if they were left to themselves. The whole play is an exact transcript of what might have taken place at the Court of Denmark five hundred years ago, before the modern refinements in morality and manners.

The character of Hamlet is itself a pure effusion of genius. It is not a character marked by strength of passion or will, but by refinement of thought and feeling. Hamlet is as little of the hero as a man can well be; but he is 'a young and princely novice,' full of high enthusiasm and quick sensibility—the sport of circumstances, questioning with fortune, and refining on his own feelings, and forced from the

natural bias of his character, by the strangeness of his situation. He seems incapable of deliberate action, and is only hurried into extremities on the spur of the occasion, when he has no time to reflect, as in the scene where he kills Polonius, and where he alters the letters which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern take with them. At other times, he remains puzzled, undecided, and sceptical, dallies with his purposes till the occasion is lost, and always finds some reason to relapse into indolence and thoughtfulness again. For this reason he refuses to kill the King when he is at his prayers, and by a refinement in malice, which is only an excuse for his own want of resolution, defers his revenge to some more fatal opportunity, when he shall be engaged in some act 'that has no relish of salvation in it.' So he scruples to trust the suggestions of the Ghost, contrives the scene of the play to have surer proof of his uncle's guilt, and then rests satisfied with this confirmation of his suspicions, and the success of his experiment, instead of acting upon it. The moral perfection of this character has been called in question. It is more natural than conformable to rules; and if not more amiable, is certainly more dramatic on that account. Hamlet is not, to be sure, a Sir Charles Grandison. In general, there is little of the drab-coloured quakerism of morality in the ethical delineations of 'that noble and liberal casuist,' as Shakespear has been well called. He does not set his heroes in the stocks of virtue, to make mouths at their own situation. His plays are not transcribed from the Whole Duty of Man! We confess, we are a little shocked at the want of refinement in those, who are shocked at the want of refinement in Hamlet. The want of punctilious exactness of behaviour either partakes of the 'license of the time,' or belongs to the very excess of intellectual refinement in the character, which makes the common rules of life, as well as his own purposes, sit loose upon him. He may be said to be amenable only to the tribunal of his own thoughts, and is too much occupied with the airy world of contemplation, to lay as much stress as he ought on the practical consequences of things. His habitual principles of action are unhinged, and 'out of joint' with the time.

This character is probably of all others the most difficult to personate on the stage. It is like the attempt to embody a shadow.

> 'Come then, the colours and the ground prepare,
> Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air,
> Chuse a firm cloud, before it falls, and in it
> Catch, 'ere she change, the Cynthia of a minute.'

Such nearly is the task which the actor imposes on himself in the

part of Hamlet. It is quite remote from hardness and dry precision. The character is spun to the finest thread, yet never loses its continuity. It has the yielding flexibility of 'a wave of the sea.' It is made up of undulating lines, without a single sharp angle. There is no set purpose, no straining at a point. The observations are suggested by the passing scene—the gusts of passion come and go, like the sounds of music borne on the wind. The interest depends not on the action, but on the thoughts—on 'that within which passeth shew.' Yet, in spite of these difficulties, Mr. Kean's representation of the character had the most brilliant success. It did not indeed come home to our feelings, as Hamlet (that very Hamlet whom we read of in our youth, and seem almost to remember in our after-years), but it was a most striking and animated rehearsal of the part.

High as Mr. Kean stood in our opinion before, we have no hesitation in saying, that he stands higher in it (and, we think, will in that of the public), from the powers displayed in this last effort. If it was less perfect as a whole, there were parts in it of a higher cast of excellence than any part of his Richard. We will say at once, in what we think his general delineation of the character wrong. It was too strong and pointed. There was often a severity, approaching to virulence, in the common observations and answers. There is nothing of this in Hamlet. He is, as it were, wrapped up in the cloud of his reflections, and only *thinks aloud*. There should therefore be no attempt to impress what he says upon others by any exaggeration of emphasis or manner, no talking *at* his hearers There should be as much of the gentleman and scholar as possible infused into the part, and as little of the actor. A pensive air of sadness should sit unwillingly upon his brow, but no appearance of fixed and sullen gloom. He is full of 'weakness and melancholy,' but there is no harshness in his nature. Hamlet should be the most amiable of misanthropes. There is no one line in this play, which should be spoken like any one line in Richard; yet Mr. Kean did not appear to us to keep the two characters always distinct. He was least happy in the last scene with Guildenstern and Rosencrantz. In some of these more familiar scenes he displayed more energy than was requisite; and in others where it would have been appropriate, did not rise equal to the exigency of the occasion. In particular, the scene with Laertes, where he leaps into the grave, and utters the exclamation, ''Tis I, Hamlet the Dane,' had not the tumultuous and overpowering effect we expected from it. To point out the defects of Mr. Kean's performance of the part, is a less grateful but a much shorter task, than to enumerate the many striking beauties which he

gave to it, both by the power of his action and by the true feeling of nature. His surprise when he first sees the Ghost, his eagerness and filial confidence in following it, the impressive pathos of his action and voice in addressing it, 'I 'll call thee Hamlet, *Father*, Royal Dane,' were admirable.

Mr. Kean has introduced in this part a *new reading*, as it is called, which we think perfectly correct. In the scene where he breaks from his friends to obey the command of his father, he keeps his sword pointed behind him, to prevent them from following him, instead of holding it before him to protect him from the Ghost. The manner of his taking Guildenstern and Rosencrantz under each arm, under pretence of communicating his secret to them, when he only means to trifle with them, had the finest effect, and was, we conceive, exactly in the spirit of the character. So was the suppressed tone of irony in which he ridicules those who gave ducats for his uncle's picture, though they would 'make mouths at him,' while his father lived. Whether the way in which Mr. Kean hesitates in repeating the first line of the speech in the interview with the player, and then, after several ineffectual attempts to recollect it, suddenly hurries on with it, 'The rugged Pyrrhus,' &c. is in perfect keeping, we have some doubts: but there was great ingenuity in the thought; and the spirit and life of the execution was beyond every thing. Hamlet's speech in describing his own melancholy, his instructions to the players, and the soliloquy on death, were all delivered by Mr. Kean in a tone of fine, clear, and natural recitation. His pronunciation of the word 'contumely' in the last of these, is, we apprehend, not authorized by custom, or by the metre.

Both the closet scene with his mother, and his remonstrances to Ophelia, were highly impressive. If there had been less vehemence of effort in the latter, it would not have lost any of its effect. But whatever nice faults might be found in this scene, they were amply redeemed by the manner of his coming back after he has gone to the extremity of the stage, from a pang of parting tenderness to press his lips to Ophelia's hand. It had an electrical effect on the house. It was the finest commentary that was ever made on Shakespear. It explained the character at once (as he meant it), as one of disappointed hope, of bitter regret, of affection suspended, not obliterated, by the distractions of the scene around him! The manner in which Mr. Kean acted in the scene of the Play before the King and Queen was the most daring of any, and the force and animation which he gave to it, cannot be too highly applauded. Its extreme boldness 'bordered on the verge of all we hate,' and the effect it produced, was a test of the extraordinary powers of this extraordinary actor.

We cannot speak too highly of Mr. Raymond's representation of the Ghost. It glided across the stage with the preternatural grandeur of a spirit. His manner of speaking the part was not equally excellent. A spirit should not whine or shed tears.

Mr. Dowton's Polonius was unworthy of so excellent an actor. The part was mistaken altogether. Polonius is not exceedingly wise, but he is not quite a fool; or if he is, he is at the same time a courtier, and a courtier of the old school. Mr. Dowton made nothing, or worse than nothing, of the part.

MR. KEAN'S OTHELLO

The Morning Chronicle. *May* 6, 1814.

Othello was acted at Drury-Lane last night, the part of Othello by Mr. Kean. His success was fully equal to the arduousness of the undertaking. In general, we might observe that he displayed the same excellences and the same defects as in his former characters. His voice and person were not altogether in consonance with the character, nor was there throughout, that noble tide of deep and sustained passion, impetuous, but majestic, that 'flows on to the Propontic, and knows no ebb,' which raises our admiration and pity of the lofty-minded Moor. There were, however, repeated bursts of feeling and energy which we have never seen surpassed. The whole of the latter part of the third act was a master-piece of profound pathos and exquisite conception, and its effect on the house was electrical. The tone of voice in which he delivered the beautiful apostrophe, 'Then, oh farewell!' struck on the heart and the imagination like the swelling notes of some divine music. The look, the action, the expression of voice, with which he accompanied the exclamation, 'Not a jot, not a jot;' the reflection, 'I felt not *Cassio's kisses* on her lips;' and his vow of revenge against Cassio, and abandonment of his love for Desdemona, laid open the very tumult and agony of the soul. In other parts, where we expected an equal interest to be excited, we were disappointed; and in the common scenes, we think Mr. Kean's manner, as we have remarked on other occasions, had more point and emphasis than the sense or character required.[1]

The rest of the play was by no means judiciously cast; indeed, almost every individual appeared to be out of his proper place.

[1] For a fuller account of Mr. Kean's Othello, see one of the last articles in this volume.

MR. KEAN'S IAGO

The Morning Chronicle. *May* 9, 1814.

The part of Iago was played at Drury-Lane on Saturday by Mr. Kean, and played with admirable facility and effect. It was the most faultless of his performances, the most consistent and entire. Perhaps the accomplished hypocrite was never so finely, so adroitly pourtrayed —a gay, light-hearted monster, a careless, cordial, comfortable villain. The preservation of character was so complete, the air and manner were so much of a piece throughout, that the part seemed more like a detached scene or single *trait*, and of shorter duration than it usually does. The ease, familiarity, and tone of nature with which the text was delivered, were quite equal to any thing we have seen in the best comic acting. It was the least overdone of all his parts, though full of point, spirit, and brilliancy. The odiousness of the character was in fact, in some measure, glossed over by the extreme grace, alacrity and rapidity of the execution. Whether this effect were 'a consummation of the art devoutly to be wished,' is another question, on which we entertain some doubts. We have already stated it as our opinion, that Mr. Kean is not a literal transcriber of his author's text; he translates his characters with great freedom and ingenuity into a language of his own; but at the same time we cannot help preferring his liberal and spirited dramatic versions, to the dull, literal, common-place monotony of his competitors. Besides, after all, in the conception of the part, he may be right, and we may be wrong. We have before complained that Mr. Kean's Richard was not gay enough, and we should now be disposed to complain that his Iago is not grave enough.

Mr. Sowerby's Othello, we are sorry to add, was a complete failure, and the rest of the play was very ill got up.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

The Morning Chronicle. *Nov.* 16, 1813.

Shakespear's tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra was brought out last night at Covent-Garden with alterations, and with considerable additions from Dryden's All for Love. The piece seems to have been in some measure got up for the occasion, as there are several claptraps in the speeches, which admit of an obvious allusion to passing characters and events, and which were eagerly seized by the audience. Of the execution of the task which the compiler has imposed upon himself, we cannot speak in terms of much praise.

Almost all the transpositions of passages which he has attempted, are, we think, injudicious and injurious to the effect. Thus the rich and poetical description of the person of Cleopatra, in the beginning of the second act—'The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne, burnt on the water,' &c. which prepares the way for, and almost seems to justify the subsequent infatuation of Antony, is here postponed till near the catastrophe, where it answers no end, and excites little interest. It would also have been much better, if the author had contented himself merely with omitting certain passages, which he might deem objectionable to a modern audience, without encumbering either the plot or dialogue with any foreign interpolation. He might have separated the gold of Shakespear from the alloy which at times accompanies it, but he ought not to have mixed it up with the heavy tinsel of Dryden. We cannot approve of the attempt to effect 'an amalgamation of the wonderful powers' of these writers, who are, in the preface to the printed play, classed together as 'two of England's greatest poets.' There is not the slightest comparison between them, either in kind or degree. There is all the difference between them, that can subsist between artificial and natural passion. Dryden never goes out of himself: he is a man of strong sense and powerful feeling, reasoning upon what he should feel in certain situations, and expressing himself in studied declamation, in general topics, expanding and varying the stock of his own ideas, so as to produce a tolerable resemblance to those of mankind in different situations, and building up, by the aid of logic and rhetoric—that is, by means of certain truths and images, generally known and easily applied, a stately and impressive poem. Whereas Shakespear does not suppose himself to be others, but at once *becomes* them. His imagination passes out of himself into them, and as it were, transmits to him their feelings and circumstances. Nothing is made out by inference and analogy, by climax and antithesis, but all comes immediately from nature—the thoughts, the images, the very words are hers. His plays can only be compared with Nature—they are unlike every thing else.

Antony and Cleopatra, though not in the first order of Shakespear's productions, is one of the best of his historical plays. It is every where full of that pervading comprehensive power, by which the poet seemed to identify himself with time and nature. The pomp and voluptuous charms of Cleopatra are displayed in all their force and lustre, as well as the effeminate grandeur of the soul of Mark Antony. The repentance of Enobarbus after his treachery to his master, the most beautiful and affecting part of the play, is here, for some reason, entirely omitted. Nothing can have more local truth and perfect character than the passage in which Cleopatra is represented as

conjecturing what were the employments of Antony in his absence. 'He's speaking now, or murmuring—where's my serpent of old Nile?' Or again, when she says to Antony, after the defeat of Actium, and his resolution to risk another fight—'It is my birth-day; I had thought to have held it poor, but since my Lord is Antony again, I will be Cleopatra.' The transition, in the present compilation, from these flashes of genius which lay open the inmost soul, to the forced mechanical style and architectural dialogue of Dryden, is abrupt and painful.

The play was got up with every advantage of external pomp and decoration. Mr. Young, as Mark Antony, exhibited a just and impressive picture of the Roman hero, struggling between the dictates of his love and honour. Mrs. M'Gibbon was a respectable and interesting representative of Octavia. Mrs. Faucit's Cleopatra conveyed at least a reflex image of the voluptuous magnificence of the Queen of Egypt. In the ironical scenes with Antony, her manner sometimes bordered too much on the affected levity of a modern fine lady, and wanted the passion and dignity of the enamoured and haughty sovereign. In the part of Ventidius, we are sorry to say, that we think Mr. Terry was by no means successful. His manner had all the turbulent ferocity of a gloomy savage, none of the lofty firmness of the Roman Senator. The expression of the passion was every where too coarse and too physical; his muscles assumed a preternatural rigidity, and the mode in which he articulated every sentence was distinct, almost to dislocation. The house, however, seemed to be of a different opinion; for, in the several scenes with Mr. Young, he was loudly and tumultuously applauded.

ARTAXERXES

The Morning Chronicle. *Oct.* 18, 1813.

Miss Stephens made her appearance again on Saturday at Covent-Garden, as Mandane, in Artaxerxes. She becomes more and more a favourite with the public. Her singing is delicious; but admired as it is, it is not yet admired as it ought to be. Oh, if she had been wafted to us from Italy!—A voice more sweet, varied, and flexible, was perhaps never heard on an English stage. In 'The Soldier tired,' her voice, though it might be said to cleave the very air, never once lost its sweetness and clearness. 'Let not rage thy bosom firing' was deservedly and rapturously encored. But if we were to express a preference, it would be to her singing the lines, 'What was my pride is now my shame,' &c. in which the notes seemed to fall

from her lips like the liquid drops from the bending flower, and her voice fluttered and died away with the expiring conflict of passion in her bosom. We know, and have felt the divine power and impassioned tones of Catalani—the lightning of her voice and of her eye—but we doubt whether she would give the ballad style of the songs in Artaxerxes, simple but elegant, chaste but full of expression, with equal purity, taste, and tenderness.

Mr. Liston's acting in Love, Law, and Physic, was as excellent as it always is. It is hard to say, whether the soul of Mr. Liston has passed into Mr. Lubin Log, or that of Mr. Lubin Log into Mr. Liston:—but a most wonderful congeniality and mutual good understanding there is between them. A more perfect personation we never witnessed. The happy compound of meanness, ignorance, vulgarity, and conceit, was given with the broadest effect, and with the nicest discrimination of feeling. Moliere would not have wished for a richer representative of his *Gentilhomme Bourgeois*. We insist the more on this point, because of all imitations we like the imitation of nature best. The marked *cockneyism* of pronouncing the V for the W, was the only circumstance to which we could object, and this is an interpolation on the part since we first saw it, suggested (we suppose) by friends. It is a hackneyed and cheap way of producing a laugh, unworthy of the true comic genius of Liston.

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

The Morning Chronicle. *Oct.* 23, 1813.

The Beggar's Opera was acted at Covent-Garden last night, for the purpose of introducing Miss Stephens in the character of Polly. The play itself is among the most popular of our dramas, and one which the public are always glad to have some new excuse for seeing acted again. Its merits are peculiarly its own. It not only delights, but instructs us, without our knowing how, and though it is at first view equally offensive to good taste and common decency. The materials, indeed, of which it is composed, the scenes, characters, and incidents, are in general of the lowest and most disgusting kind; but the author, by the sentiments and reflections which he has put into the mouths of highwaymen, turnkeys, their wives and daughters, has converted the motley groupe into a set of fine gentlemen and ladies, satirists, and philosophers. What is still more extraordinary, he has effected this transformation without once violating probability, or 'o'erstepping the modesty of nature.' In fact, Gay has in this instance turned the tables on the critics; and by the assumed license

of the mock-heroic style, has enabled himself to *do justice to nature*, that is, to give all the force, truth, and locality of real feeling to the thoughts and expressions, without being called to the bar of false taste, and affected delicacy. We might particularly refer to Polly's description of the death of her lover, and to the song, 'Woman is like the fair flower in its lustre,' the extreme beauty and feeling of which are only equalled by their characteristic propriety and *naivete*. Every line of this sterling Comedy sparkles with wit, and is fraught with the keenest and bitterest invective.

It has been said by a great moralist, 'There is some soul of goodness in things evil;' and The Beggar's Opera is a good-natured, but severe comment on this text. The poet has thrown all the gaiety and sunshine of the imagination, the intoxication of pleasure, and the vanity of despair, round the short-lived existence of his heroes, while Peachum and Lockitt are seen in the back ground, parcelling out their months and weeks between them. The general view of human life is of the most refined and abstracted kind. With the happiest art, the author has brought out the good qualities and interesting emotions almost inseparable from humanity in the lowest situations, and with the same penetrating glance, has detected the disguises which rank and circumstance lend to exalted vice. It may be said that the moral of the piece (which some respectable critics have been at a loss to discover), *is to shew the vulgarity of vice*; or that the sophisms with which the great and powerful palliate their violations of integrity and decorum, are, in fact, common to them with the vilest, most abandoned and contemptible of the species. What can be more galling than the arguments used by these would-be politicians, to prove that in hypocrisy, selfishness, and treachery, they are far behind some of their betters? The exclamation of Mrs. Peachum, when her daughter marries Macheath, 'Hussey, hussey, you will be as ill used and as much neglected as if you had married a Lord,' is worth all Miss Hannah More's laboured invectives on the laxity of the manners of high life!

The innocent and amiable Polly found a most interesting representative in Miss Stephens. Her acting throughout was simple, unaffected, graceful, and full of tenderness. Her tones in speaking, though low, and suited to the gentleness of the character, were distinct, and varied with great flexibility. She will lose by her performance of this part, none of the reputation she has gained in Mandane. The manner in which she gave the song in the first act, 'But he so teazed me,' &c. was sweetness itself: the notes undulated through the house, amidst murmurs of rapturous applause. She gave equal animation and feeling to the favourite air, 'Cease your funning.'

To this, however, as well as to some other of the songs, a more dramatic effect might perhaps be given. There is a severity of feeling, and a plaintive sadness, both in the words and music of the songs in this Opera, on which too much stress cannot be laid.

Oct. 30.

Miss Stephens made her appearance again last night at Covent-Garden, in Polly, with additional lustre. Her timidity was overcome, and her voice was exerted in all its force and sweetness. We find so much real taste, elegance, and feeling, in this very delightful singer, that we cannot help repeating our praise of her, though, perhaps, by so doing, we shall only irritate the sullen fury of certain formidable critics, at the appearance of a new favourite of the public. We are aware that there is a class of connoisseurs whose envy it might be prudent to disarm, by some compromise with their perverted taste; who are horror-struck at grace and beauty, and who can only find relief and repose in the consoling thoughts of deformity and defect; whose blood curdles into poison at deserved reputation, who shudder at every temptation *to admire*, as an unpardonable crime, and shrink from whatever gives delight to others, with more than monkish self-denial. These kind of critics are well described by Molière, as displaying, on all occasions, an invincible hatred for what the rest of the world admire, and an inconceivable partiality for those perfections which none but themselves can discover. The secret both of their affection and enmity is the same—their pride is mortified with whatever can give pleasure, and soothed with what excites only pity or indifference. They search out with scrupulous malice, the smallest defect or excess of every kind: it is only when it becomes painfully oppressive to every one else, that they are reconciled to it. A critic of this order is dissatisfied with the *embonpoint* of Miss Stephens; while his eye reposes with perfect self-complacency on the little round graces of Mrs. Liston's person!

RICHARD CŒUR DE LION

The Morning Chronicle. *May* 27, 1814.

Richard Cœur de Lion was brought out last night at Covent-Garden, in which Miss Stephens made her appearance in the character of Matilda. She looked and spoke the part well, but the favourite pathetic air of 'Oh, Richard! oh, my love,' was omitted, we suppose in consequence of indisposition.

The new farce, called 'Tricking's fair in Love,' followed, but

with little success; for after being heard out with great fairness, it was decidedly condemned at last, notwithstanding some inimitable acting by Liston as Count Hottentot. We never saw his face in a state of higher keeping. It was quite rich and unctuous.

A young lady (Miss Foote) afterwards made her first appearance in Amanthis. Her face and figure excited the liveliest interest as soon as she appeared; which her manner of executing the part did not diminish, but increased as she proceeded. Her voice possesses great clearness and sweetness, and her enunciation is exceedingly distinct and articulate, without any appearance of labour. Her features are soft and regular. She perfectly answered to the idea which we form of youth, beauty, grace, and artless innocence in the original character. She seemed to be, indeed, the Child of Nature, such as

'Youthful poets fancy when they love.'

Her reception throughout was flattering in the highest degree.

DIDONE ABANDONNATA

The Champion. *August* 14, 1814.

The Opera closed for the season on Saturday last. We attended on this farewell occasion, without any strong feelings of regret for the past, or of sanguine expectations for the future. The Opera, from its constant and powerful appeals to the senses, by imagery, by sound, and motion, is well calculated to amuse or stimulate the intellectual languor of those classes of society, on whose support it immediately depends. This is its highest aim, and its appropriate use. But, without the aid of luxurious pomp, what can there be to interest in this merely artificial vehicle of show, and dance, and song, which is purposely constructed so as to lull every effort of the understanding and feeling of the heart in the soft, soothing effeminacy of sensual enjoyment? The Opera Muse is not a beautiful virgin who can hope to charm by simplicity and sensibility; but a tawdry courtesan, who, when her paint and patches, her rings and jewels are stripped off, can excite only disgust and ridicule. This is the state to which she has been reduced by dissentions among her keepers for the last season.—Nothing could be more unpleasant than the impression produced on our minds by the exhibition of Saturday last. Tattered hanging fragments of curtains, disjointed machinery, silver pannels turned black, a few thin y scattered lamps badly lighted, were among the various circumstances which threw a damp over our spirits. Bank-

ruptcy every where stared us in the face. The general *coup d'œil* of the theatre had no affinity with gaiety or grandeur. The whole had the melancholy appearance, without any of the sublimity, of some relic of eastern magnificence.

The Opera was Didone Abandonnata, in which Madame Grassini performed the part of the unfortunate Queen, and Signor Tramezzani (appearing for the last time on the English stage), that of the faithless Æneas. During the greater part of the first act, there was hardly any body in the pit, and nobody in the boxes. The performance evidently partook of the apathy of the public. We do not know otherwise how to account for the undress manner in which Madame Grassini acted the part of Dido. She walked through it with the most perfect indifference, or as if she had been at a morning rehearsal before empty benches. The graceful dignity of the character never left her, but it was the habitual grace of a queen surrounded by her maids of honour, not the impassioned energy of a queen enamoured of the son of a goddess, and courted by Numidian kings. Even after the desertion of Æneas, and when the flames of her capital were surrounding her, the terror and agitation she displayed did not amount to the anxiety of a common assignation-scene; her trills and quavers very artfully mimicked the uncertain progress of the tremulous flames; and she at last left the stage, not as if rushing in an agony of despair to her fate, but with the hurry and alarm of a person who is afraid of being detected in a clandestine correspondence. In some passages, however, both of the recitative and the songs, the beauty of the movement or the force of the sentiment drew from her tones of mingled grace and energy, which 'might create a soul under the ribs of death.' This effect seemed to be purely involuntary, and not to proceed from any desire to gratify the audience, or to do justice to the part she had to sustain.

The same objections cannot be applied to the acting of Signor Tramezzani, in which there was no want of animation or effort. We are not among this gentleman's enthusiastic admirers; at the same time we would not wish to speak of him more contemptuously than he deserves. There is, we think, in general, considerable propriety in his conception, and great spirit in his execution; but it is almost universally carried into grimace and caricature. His heroes have the fierceness of bullies; his lovers are the fondest creatures;—his frowns and his smiles seem alike fated to kill. We object most to the latter. Signor Tramezzani is really too prodigal of his physical accomplishments: his acting is quite of the amatory kind. We see no reason why Æneas, because Dido takes him by the hand, should ogle the sweet heavens with such tender glances, nor why his lips should feed

on the imagination of a kiss, as if he had tasted marmalade. Signor Tramezzani's amorous raptures put us in mind of the pious ardours of a female saint, who sighs out her soul at some divine man at a conventicle. We hate such fulsome fooleries.

After the Opera 'God save the King' was sung. The first verse was given by Madame Grassini, with that ease and simplicity which are natural to her. The second was torn to tatters by Signor Tramezzani with every preposterous accompaniment of imitative action. Into the homely couplet,

> 'Scatter his enemies,
> And make them fall,'

he introduced as much heroic action, as if Jove, in the first line, had had to shake a thousand thunderbolts from his hand, and in the next to transfix the giants to the earth. The bow with which this celebrated actor quitted the stage was endless and inimitable. The Genius of Scotland would have turned pale with envy at the sight! Of the other performers we shall say nothing. M. Vestris made an able-bodied representative of Zephyr in the ballet.

MISS O'NEILL'S JULIET

The Champion. *Oct.* 16, 1814.

We occasionally see something on the stage that reminds us a little of Shakespear. Miss O'Neill's Juliet, if it does not correspond exactly with our idea of the character, does not degrade it. We never saw Garrick; and Mrs. Siddons was the only person who ever embodied our idea of high tragedy. Her mind and person were both fitted for it. The effect of her acting was greater than could be conceived before-hand. It perfectly filled and overpowered the mind. The first time of seeing this great artist was an epoch in every one's life, and left impressions which could never be forgotten. She appeared to belong to a superior order of beings, to be surrounded with a personal awe, like some prophetess of old, or Roman matron, the mother of Coriolanus or the Gracchi. Her voice answered to her form, and her expression to both. Yet she was a pantomime actress. Her common recitation was faulty. It was in bursts of indignation, or grief, in sudden exclamations, in apostrophes and inarticulate sounds, that she raised the soul of passion to its height, or sunk it in despair.

We remember her manner in the Gamester, when Stukeley, (it

was then played by Palmer), declares his love to her. The look, first of incredulity and astonishment, then of anger, then passing suddenly into contempt, and ending in bitter scorn, and a convulsive burst of laughter, all given in a moment, and laying open every movement of the soul, produced an effect which we shall never forget. Her manner of rubbing her hands, in the night scene in Macbeth, and of dismissing the guests at the banquet, were among her finest things. We have, many years ago, wept outright during the whole time of her playing Isabella, and this we take to have been a higher employment of the critical faculties than doubling down the book in dog-ears to make out a regular list of critical common-places. To the tears formerly shed on such occasions, we may apply the words of a modern dashing orator, 'Sweet is the dew of their memory, and pleasant the balm of their recollection.'

We have, we believe, been betrayed into this digression, because Miss O'Neill, more than any late actress, reminded us in certain passages, and in a faint degree, of Mrs. Siddons. This young lady, who will probably become a favourite with the public, is rather tall; and though not *of the first order of fine forms*, her figure is of that respectable kind, which will not interfere with the characters she represents. Her deportment is not particularly graceful: there is a heaviness, and want of firmness about it. Her features are regular, and the upper part of her face finely expressive of terror or sorrow. It has that mixture of beauty and passion which we admire so much in some of the antique statues. The lower part of her face is not equally good. From a want of fulness or flexibility about the mouth, her laugh is not at any time pleasing, and where it is a laugh of terror, is distorted and painful. Her voice, without being musical, is distinct, powerful, and capable of every necessary exertion. Her action is impressive and simple. She looks the part she has to perform, and fills up the pauses in the words, by the varied expression of her countenance or gestures, without any thing artificial, pointed, or far-fetched.

In the silent expression of feeling, we have seldom witnessed any thing finer than her acting, where she is told of Romeo's death, her listening to the Friar's story of the poison, and her change of manner towards the Nurse, when she advises her to marry Paris. Her delivery of the speeches in the scenes where she laments Romeo's banishment, and anticipates her waking in the tomb, marked the fine play and undulation of natural sensibility, rising and falling with the gusts of passion, and at last worked up into an agony of despair, in which imagination approaches the brink of frenzy. Her actually screaming at the imaginary sight of Tybalt's ghost, appeared to us the

only instance of extravagance or caricature. Not only is there a distinction to be kept up between physical and intellectual horror, (for the latter becomes more general, internal, and absorbed, in proportion as it becomes more intense), but the scream, in the present instance, startled the audience, as it preceded the speech which explained its meaning. Perhaps the emphasis given to the exclamation, '*And Romeo banished*,' and to the description of Tybalt, '*festering in his shroud*,' was too much in that epigrammatic, pointed style, which we think inconsistent with the severe and simple dignity of tragedy.

In the last scene, at the tomb with Romeo, which, however, is not from Shakespear, though it tells admirably on the stage, she did not produce the effect we expected. Miss O'Neill seemed least successful in the former part of the character, in the garden scene, &c. The expression of tenderness bordered on hoydening, and affectation. The character of Juliet is a pure effusion of nature. It is as serious, and as much in earnest, as it is frank and susceptible. It has all the exquisite voluptuousness of youthful innocence.—There is not the slightest appearance of coquetry in it, no sentimental languor, no meretricious assumption of fondness to take her lover by surprise. She ought not to laugh, when she says, 'I have forgot why I did call thee back,' as if conscious of the artifice, nor hang in a fondling posture over the balcony. Shakespear has given a fine idea of the composure of the character, where he first describes her at the window, leaning her cheek upon her arm. The whole expression of her love should be like the breath of flowers.

Mr. Jones's Mercutio was lively farce. Of Mr. Conway's Romeo, we cannot speak with patience. He bestrides the stage like a Colossus, throws his arms into the air like the sails of a windmill, and his motion is as unwieldy as that of a young elephant. His voice breaks in thunder on the ear like Gargantua's, but when he pleases to be soft, he is 'the very beadle to an amorous sigh.' Mr. Coates's absurdities are tame and trifling in comparison.—*Quere*, Why does he not marry?

MR. KEAN'S RICHARD.

The Champion. *Oct.* 9, 1814.

We do not think Mr. Kean at all improved by his Irish expedition. As this is a point in which we feel a good deal of interest, both on Mr. Kean's account and our own, we shall state briefly our objections to some alterations in his mode of acting, which appear to

us for the worse. His pauses are twice as long as they were, and the rapidity with which he hurries over other parts of the dialogue is twice as great as it was. In both these points, his style of acting always bordered on the very verge of extravagance; and we suspect it has at present passed the line. There are, no doubt, passages in which the pauses can hardly be too long, or too marked;—these must be, however, of rare occurrence, and it is in the finding out these exceptions to the general rule, and in daring to give them all their effect, that the genius of an actor discovers itself. But the most common-place drawling monotony is not more mechanical or more offensive, than the converting these exceptions into a general rule, and making every sentence an alternation of dead pauses and rapid transitions.[1] It is not in extremes that dramatic genius is shewn, any more than skill in music consists in passing continually from the highest to the lowest note. The quickness of familiar utterance with which Mr. Kean pronounced the anticipated doom of Stanley, 'chop off his head,' was quite ludicrous. Again, the manner in which, after his nephew said, 'I fear no uncles dead,' he suddenly turned round, and answered, 'And I hope none living, sir,' was, we thought, quite out of character. The motion was performed, and the sounds uttered, in the smallest possible time in which a puppet could be made to mimic or gabble the part. For this we see not the least reason; and can only account for it, from a desire to give excessive effect by a display of the utmost dexterity of execution.

It is almost needless to observe, that executive power in acting, as in all other arts, is only valuable as it is made subservient to truth and nature. Even some want of mechanical skill is better than the perpetual affectation of shewing it. The absence of a quality is often less provoking than its abuse, because less voluntary.

The part which was least varied was the scene with Lady Anne. This is, indeed, nearly a perfect piece of acting. In leaning against the pillar at the commencement of the scene, Mr. Kean did not go through exactly the same regular evolution of graceful attitudes, and we regretted the omission. He frequently varied the execution of many of his most striking conceptions, and the attempt in general failed, as it naturally must do. We refer particularly to his manner of resting on the point of his sword before he retires to his tent, to

[1] An old gentleman, riding over Putney-bridge, turned round to his servant, and said, 'Do you like eggs, John?' 'Yes, sir.' Here the conversation ended. The same gentleman riding over the same bridge that day year, again turned round, and said, 'How?' 'Poached, sir,' was the answer.—This is the longest pause upon record, and has something of a dramatic effect, though it could not be transferred to the stage. Perhaps an actor might go so far, on the principle of indefinite pauses, as to begin a sentence in one act, and finish it in the next.

his treatment of the letter sent to Norfolk, and to his dying scene with Richmond.

Mr. Kean's *bye-play* is certainly one of his greatest excellences, and it might be said, that if Shakespear had written marginal directions to the players, in the manner of the German dramatists, he would often have directed them to do what Mr. Kean does. Such additions to the text are, however, to be considered as lucky hits, and it is not to be supposed that an actor is to provide an endless variety of these running accompaniments, which he is not in strictness bound to provide at all. In general, we think it a rule, that an actor ought to vary his part as little as possible, unless he is convinced that his former mode of playing it is erroneous. He should make up his mind as to the best mode of representing the part, and come as near to this standard as he can, in every successive exhibition. It is absurd to object to this mechanical uniformity as studied and artificial. All acting is studied or artificial. An actor is no more called upon to vary his gestures or articulation at every new rehearsal of the character, than an author can be required to furnish various readings to every separate copy of his work. To a new audience it is quite unnecessary; to those who have seen him before in the same part, it is worse than useless. They may at least be presumed to have come to a second representation, because they approved of the first, and will be sure to be disappointed in almost every alteration. The attempt is endless, and can only produce perplexity and indecision in the actor himself. He must either return perpetually in the same narrow round, or if he is determined to be always new, he may at last fancy that he ought to perform the part standing on his head instead of his feet. Besides, Mr. Kean's style of acting is not in the least of the unpremeditated, *improvisatori* kind: it is throughout elaborate and systematic, instead of being loose, off-hand, and accidental. He comes upon the stage as little unprepared as any actor we know. We object particularly to his varying the original action in the dying scene. He at first held out his hands in a way which can only be conceived by those who saw him—in motionless despair,—or as if there were some preternatural power in the mere manifestation of his will:—he now actually fights with his doubled fists, after his sword is taken from him, like some helpless infant.

We have been quite satisfied with the attempts we have seen to ape Mr. Kean in this part, without wishing to see him ape himself in it. There is no such thing as trick in matters of genius. All poetical licenses, however beautiful in themselves, by being parodied, instantly become ridiculous. It is because beauties of this kind have no clue

to them, and are reducible to no standard, that it is the peculiar province of genius to detect them; by making them common, and reducing them to a rule, you make them perfectly mechanical, and perfectly absurd into the bargain.

To conclude our hypercritical remarks: we really think that Mr. Kean was, in a great many instances, either too familiar, too emphatical, or too energetic. In the latter scenes, perhaps his energy could not be too great; but he gave the energy of action alone. He merely gesticulated, or at best vociferated the part. His articulation totally failed him. We doubt, if a single person in the house, not acquainted with the play, understood a single sentence that he uttered. It was 'inexplicable dumb show and noise.'—We wish to throw the fault of most of our objections on the managers. Their conduct has been marked by one uniform character, a paltry attention to their own immediate interest, a distrust of Mr. Kean's abilities to perform more than the character he had succeeded in, and a contempt for the wishes of the public. They have spun him tediously out in every character, and have forced him to display the variety of his talents in the same, instead of different characters. They kept him back in Shylock, till he nearly failed in Richard from a cold. Why not bring him out in Macbeth, which was at one time got up for him? Why not bring him out at once in a variety of characters, as the Dublin managers have done? It does not appear that either they or he suffered by it. It seems, by all we can find, that versatility is, perhaps, Mr. Kean's greatest excellence. Why, then, not give him his range? Why tantalize the public? Why extort from them their last shilling for the twentieth repetition of the same part, instead of letting them make their election for themselves, of what they like best? It is really very pitiful.

Ill as we conceive the London managers have treated him, the London audiences have treated him well, and we wish Mr. Kean, for some years at least, to stick to them. They are his best friends; and he may assuredly account us, who have made these sorry remarks upon him, not among his worst. After he has got through the season here well, we see no reason why he should make himself hoarse with performing Hamlet at twelve o'clock, and Richard at six, at Kidderminster. At his time of life, and with his prospects, the improvement of his fortune is not the principal thing. A training under Captain Barclay would do more towards strengthening his mind and body, his fame and fortune, than sharing bumper receipts with the Dublin managers, or carousing with the whole Irish bar. Or, if Mr. Kean does not approve of this rough regimen, he might devote the summer vacation to the Muses. To a man of genius, leisure is the first of

benefits, as well as of luxuries; where, 'with her best nurse, Contemplation,' the mind

> 'Can plume her feathers, and let grow her wings,
> That in the various bustle of resort
> Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impaired.'

It was our first duty to point out Mr. Kean's excellences to the public, and we did so with no sparing hand; it is our second duty to him, to ourselves, and the public, to distinguish between his excellences and defects, and to prevent, if possible, his excellences from degenerating into defects.

MR. KEAN'S MACBETH

The Champion. *Nov.* 13, 1814.

The genius of Shakespear was as much shewn in the subtlety and nice discrimination, as in the force and variety of his characters. The distinction is not preserved more completely in those which are the most opposite, than in those which in their general features and obvious appearance most nearly resemble each other. It has been observed, with very little exaggeration, that not one of his speeches could be put into the mouth of any other character than the one to which it is given, and that the transposition, if attempted, might be always detected from some circumstance in the passage itself. If *to invent according to nature*, be the true definition of genius, Shakespear had more of this quality than any other writer. He might be said to have been a joint-worker with Nature, and to have created an imaginary world of his own, which has all the appearance and the truth of reality. His mind, while it exerted an absolute controul over the stronger workings of the passions, was exquisitely alive to the slightest impulses and most evanescent shades of character and feeling. The broad distinctions and governing principles of human nature are presented not in the abstract, but in their immediate and endless application to different persons and things. The local details, the particular accidents have the fidelity of history, without losing any thing of their general effect.

It is the business of poetry, and indeed of all works of imagination, to exhibit the species through the individual. Otherwise, there can be no opportunity for the exercise of the imagination, without which the descriptions of the painter or the poet are lifeless, unsubstantial, and vapid. If some modern critics are right, with their sweeping

generalities and vague abstractions, Shakespear was quite wrong. In the French dramatists, only the class is represented, never the individual: their kings, their heroes, and their lovers are all the same, and they are all French—that is, they are nothing but the mouth-pieces of certain rhetorical common-place sentiments on the favourite topics of morality and the passions. The characters in Shakespear do not declaim like pedantic school-boys, but speak and act like men, placed in real circumstances, with 'real hearts of flesh and blood beating in their bosoms.' No two of his characters are the same, more than they would be so in nature. Those that are the most alike, are distinguished by positive differences, which accompany and modify the leading principle of the character through its most obscure ramifications, embodying the habits, gestures, and almost the looks of the individual. These touches of nature are often so many, and so minute, that the poet cannot be supposed to have been distinctly aware of the operation of the springs by which his imagination was set at work: yet every one of the results is brought out with a truth and clearness, as if his whole study had been directed to that peculiar trait of character, or subordinate train of feeling.

Thus Macbeth, and Richard the Third, King Henry the Sixth, and Richard the Second,—characters that, in their general description, and in common hands, would be merely repetitions of the same idea—are distinguished by traits as precise, though of course less violent, than those which separate Macbeth from Henry the Sixth, or Richard the Third from Richard the Second. Shakespear has, with wonderful accuracy, and without the smallest appearance of effort, varied the portraits of imbecility and effeminacy in the two deposed monarchs. With still more powerful and masterly strokes, he has marked the different effects of ambition and cruelty, operating on different dispositions in different circumstances, in his Macbeth and Richard the Third. Both are tyrants and usurpers, both violent and ambitious, both cruel and treacherous. But, Richard is cruel from nature and constitution. Macbeth becomes so from accidental circumstances. He is urged to the commission of guilt by golden opportunity, by the instigations of his wife, and by prophetic warnings. 'Fate and metaphysical aid,' conspire against his virtue and loyalty. Richard needs no prompter, but wades through a series of crimes to the height of his ambition, from ungovernable passions and the restless love of mischief. He is never gay but in the prospect, or in the success of his villanies: Macbeth is full of horror at the thoughts of the murder of Duncan, and of remorse after its perpetration. Richard has no mixture of humanity in his composition,

no tie which binds him to the kind; he owns no fellowship with others, but is himself alone. Macbeth is not without feelings of sympathy, is accessible to pity, is even the dupe of his uxoriousness, and ranks the loss of friends and of his good name among the causes that have made him sick of life. He becomes more callous indeed as he plunges deeper in guilt, 'direness is thus made familiar to his slaughterous thoughts,' and he anticipates his wife in the boldness and bloodiness of his enterprises, who, for want of the same stimulus of action, is 'troubled with thick-coming fancies,' walks in her sleep, goes mad, and dies. Macbeth endeavours to escape from reflection on his crimes, by repelling their consequences, and banishes remorse for the past, by meditating future mischief. This is not the principle of Richard's cruelty, which resembles the cold malignity of a fiend, rather than the frailty of human nature. Macbeth is goaded on by necessity; to Richard, blood is a pastime.—

There are other essential differences. Richard is a man of the world, a vulgar, plotting, hardened villain, wholly regardless of every thing but his own ends, and the means to accomplish them. Not so Macbeth. The superstitions of the time, the rude state of society, the local scenery and customs, all give a wildness and imaginary grandeur to his character. From the strangeness of the events which surround him, he is full of amazement and fear, and stands in doubt between the world of reality and the world of fancy. He sees sights not shewn to mortal eye, and hears unearthly music. All is tumult and disorder within and without his mind. In thought, he is absent and perplexed, desperate in act: his purposes recoil upon himself, are broken, and disjointed: he is the double thrall of his passions and his evil destiny. He treads upon the brink of fate, and grows dizzy with his situation. Richard is not a character of imagination, but of pure will or passion. There is no conflict of opposite feelings in his breast. The apparitions which he sees are in his sleep, nor does he live like Macbeth, in a waking dream.

Such, at least, is our conception of the two characters, as drawn by Shakespear. Mr. Kean does not distinguish them so completely as he might. His Richard comes nearer to the original than his Macbeth. He was deficient in the poetry of the character. He did not look like a man who had encountered the Weird Sisters. There should be nothing tight or compact in Macbeth, no tenseness of fibre, nor pointed decision of manner. He has, indeed, energy and manliness of soul, but 'subject to all the skyey influences.' He is sure of nothing. All is left at issue. He runs a-tilt with fortune, and is baffled with preternatural riddles. The agitation of his mind resembles the rolling of the sea in a storm; or, he is like a lion in

the toils—fierce, impetuous, and ungovernable. In the fifth act in particular, which is in itself as busy and turbulent as possible, there was not that giddy whirl of the imagination—the character did not burnish out on all sides with those flashes of genius, of which Mr. Kean had given so fine an earnest in the conclusion of his Richard. The scene stood still—the parts might be perfect in themselves, but they were not joined together; they wanted vitality. The pauses in the speeches were too long—the actor seemed to be studying the part, rather than performing it—striving to make every word more emphatic than the last, and 'lost too poorly in himself,' instead of being carried away with the grandeur of his subject. The text was not given accurately. Macbeth is represented in the play, arming before the castle, which adds to the interest of the scene.

In the delivery of the beautiful soliloquy, 'My way of life is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf,' Mr. Kean was unsuccessful. That fine thoughtful melancholy did not seem to come over his mind, which characterises Mr. Kemble's recitation of these lines. The very tone of Mr. Kemble's voice has something retrospective in it—it is an echo of the past. Mr. Kean in his dress was occasionally too much docked and curtailed for the gravity of the character. His movements were too agile and mercurial, and he fought more like a modern fencing-master than a Scottish chieftain of the eleventh century. He fell at last finely, with his face downwards, as if to cover the shame of his defeat. We recollect that Mr. Cooke discovered the great actor both in the death-scene in Macbeth, and in that of Richard. He fell like the ruin of a state, like a king with his regalia about him.

The two finest things that Mr. Kean has ever done, are his recitation of the passage in Othello, 'Then, oh, farewell the tranquil mind,' and the scene in Macbeth after the murder. The former was the highest and most perfect effort of his art. To enquire whether his manner in the latter scene was that of a king who commits a murder, or of a man who commits a murder to become a king, would be 'to consider too curiously.' But, as a lesson of common humanity, it was heart-rending. The hesitation, the bewildered look, the coming to himself when he sees his hands bloody; the manner in which his voice clung to his throat, and choaked his utterance; his agony and tears, the force of nature overcome by passion—beggared description. It was a scene, which no one who saw it can ever efface from his recollection.

A VIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE

MR. KEAN'S ROMEO

The Champion. *January* 8, 1815.

Mr. Kean appeared at Drury-Lane in the character of Romeo, for the first time on Monday last. The house was crowded at an early hour, and neither those who went to admire, nor those who went to find fault, could go away disappointed. He discovered no new and unlooked-for excellences in the part, but displayed the same extraordinary energies which he never fails to do on every occasion. There is, indeed, a set of ingenious persons, who having perceived on Mr. Kean's first appearance, that he was a little man with an inharmonious voice, and no very great dignity or elegance of manner, go regularly to the theatre to confirm themselves in this singular piece of sagacity; and finding that the object of their contempt and wonder has not, since they last saw him, 'added a cubit to his stature,'—that his tones have not become 'as musical as is Apollo's lute,' and that there is still an habitual want of grace about him, are determined, till such a metamorphosis is effected, not to allow a particle of genius to the actor, or of taste or common sense to those who are not stupidly blind to every thing but his defects. That an actor with very moderate abilities, having the advantages of voice, person and gracefulness of manner on his side, should acquire a very high reputation, is what we can understand, and have seen some instances of; but that an actor with almost every physical disadvantage against him, should, without very extraordinary powers and capacities indeed, be able to excite the most enthusiastic and general admiration, would, we conceive, be a phenomenon in the history of public imposture, totally without example. In fact, the generality of critics who undertake to give the tone to public opinion, have neither the courage nor discernment to decide on the merits of a truly excellent and original actor, and are equally without the candour to acknowledge their error, after they find themselves in the wrong.

In going to see Mr. Kean in any new character, we do not go in the expectation of seeing either a perfect actor or perfect acting; because this is what we have not yet seen, either in him or in any one else. But we go to see (what he never disappoints us in) great spirit, ingenuity, and originality given to the text in general, and an energy and depth of passion given to certain scenes and passages, which we should in vain look for from any other actor on the stage. In every character that he has played, in Shylock, in Richard, in Hamlet, in Othello, in Iago, in Luke, and in Macbeth, there has been either a dazzling repetition of master-strokes of art and nature, or if at any time (from a want of physical adaptation, or sometimes

of just conception of the character) the interest has flagged for a considerable interval, the deficiency has always been redeemed by some collected and overpowering display of energy or pathos, which electrified at the moment, and left a lasting impression on the mind afterwards. Such, for instance, were the murder-scene in Macbeth, the third act of his Othello, the interview with Ophelia in Hamlet, and, lastly, the scene with Friar Lawrence, and the death-scene in Romeo.

Of the characters that Mr. Kean has played, Hamlet and Romeo are the most like one another, at least in adventitious circumstances; those to which Mr. Kean's powers are least adapted, and in which he has failed most in general truth of conception and continued interest. There is in both characters the same strong tincture of youthful enthusiasm, of tender melancholy, of romantic thought and sentiment; but we confess we did not see these qualities in Mr. Kean's performance of either. His Romeo had nothing of the lover in it. We never saw any thing less ardent or less voluptuous. In the Balcony-scene in particular, he was cold, tame, and unimpressive. It was said of Garrick and Barry in this scene, that the one acted it as if he would jump up to the lady, and the other as if he would make the lady jump down to him. Mr. Kean produced neither of these effects. He stood like a statue of lead. Even Mr. Conway might feel taller on the occasion, and Mr. Coates wonder at the taste of the public. The only time in this scene when he attempted to give any thing like an effect, was when he smiled on over-hearing Juliet's confession of her passion. But the smile was less like that of a fortunate lover who unexpectedly hears his happiness confirmed, than of a discarded lover, who hears of the disappointment of a rival.—The whole of this part not only wanted 'the silver sound of lovers' tongues by night' to recommend it, but warmth, tenderness,—every thing which it should have possessed. Mr. Kean was like a man waiting to receive a message from his mistress through her confidante, not like one who was pouring out his rapturous vows to the idol of his soul. There was neither glowing animation, nor melting softness in his manner; his cheek was not flushed, no sigh breathed involuntary from his overcharged bosom: all was forced and lifeless. His acting sometimes reminded us of the scene with Lady Anne, and we cannot say a worse thing of it, considering the difference of the two characters. Mr. Kean's imagination appears not to have the principles of joy, or hope, or love in it. He seems chiefly sensible to pain, or to the passions that spring from it, and to the terrible energies of mind or body, which are necessary to grapple with, or to avert it. Even over the world of passion he holds but a divided sway: he either does not feel, or

seldom expresses, deep, sustained, internal sentiment,—there is no repose in his mind: no feeling seems to take full possession of it, that is not linked to action, and that does not goad him on to the phrenzy of despair. Or if he ever conveys the sublimer pathos of thought and feeling, it is after the storm of passion, to which he has been worked up, has subsided. The tide of feeling then at times rolls deep, majestic, and awful, like the surging sea after a tempest, now lifted to Heaven, now laying bare the bosom of the deep. Thus after the violence and anguish of the scene with Iago, in the third act of Othello, his voice in the farewell apostrophe to Content, took the deep intonation of the pealing organ, and heaved from the heart sounds that came on the ear like the funeral dirge of years of promised happiness. So in the midst of the extravagant and irresistible expression of Romeo's grief, at being banished from the object of his love, his voice suddenly stops, and faulters, and is choaked with sobs of tenderness, when he comes to Juliet's name. Those persons must be made of sterner stuff than ourselves, who are proof against Mr. Kean's acting, both in this scene, and in his dying convulsion at the close of the play. But in the fine soliloquy beginning, 'What said my man, when my betossed soul, &c.'—and at the tomb afterwards—'Here will I set up my everlasting rest, and shake the yoke of inauspicious stars from this world-wearied flesh,'—in these, where the sentiment is subdued and profound, and the passion is lost in calm, fixed despair, Mr. Kean's acting was comparatively ineffectual. There was nothing in his manner of delivering this last exquisitely beautiful speech, which echoed to the still sad music of humanity, which recalled past hopes, or reposed on the dim shadowings of futurity.

Mr. Kean affects the audience from the force of passion instead of sentiment, or sinks into pathos from the violence of action, but seldom rises into it from the power of thought and feeling. In this respect, he presents almost a direct contrast to Miss O'Neill. Her energy always arises out of her sensibility. Distress takes possession of, and overcomes her faculties; she triumphs in her weakness, and vanquishes by yielding. Mr. Kean is greatest in the conflict of passion, and resistance to his fate, in the opposition of his will, in the keen excitement of his understanding. His Romeo is, in the best scenes, very superior to Miss O'Neill's Juliet; but it is with some difficulty, and after some reflection, that we should say that the finest parts of his acting are superior to the finest parts of hers;—to her parting with Jaffier in Belvidera,—to her terror and her joy in meeting with Biron, in Isabella,—to the death-scene in the same character, and to the scene in the prison with her husband as Mrs.

Beverley. Her acting is undoubtedly more correct, equable, and faultless throughout than Mr. Kean's, and it is quite as affecting at the time, in the most impassioned parts. But it does not leave the same impression on the mind afterwards. It adds little to the stock of our ideas, or to our materials for reflection, but passes away with the momentary illusion of the scene. And this difference of effect, perhaps, arises from the difference of the parts they have to sustain on the stage. In the female characters which Miss O'Neill plays, the distress is in a great measure physical and natural: that is,—such as is common to every sensible woman in similar circumstances. She abandons herself to every impulse of grief or tenderness, and revels in the excess of an uncontroulable affliction. She can call to her aid, with perfect propriety and effect, all the weaknesses of her sex,—tears, sighs, convulsive sobs, shrieks, death-like stupefaction, and laughter more terrible than all. But it is not the same in the parts in which Mr. Kean has to act. There must here be a manly fortitude, as well as a natural sensibility. There must be a restraint constantly put upon the feelings by the understanding and the will. He must be 'as one, in suffering all, who suffers nothing.' He cannot give way entirely to his situation or his feelings, but must endeavour to become master of them, and of himself. This, in our conception, must make it more easy to give entire effect and interest to female characters on the stage, by rendering the expression of passion more obvious, simple, and natural; and must also make them less rememberable afterwards, by leaving less scope for the exercise of intellect, and for the distinct and complicated reaction of the character upon circumstances. At least, we can only account in some such way for the different impressions which the acting of these two admired performers makes on our mind, when we see, or when we think of them. As critics, we particularly feel this. Mr. Kean affords a never-failing source of observation and discussion; we can only *praise* Miss O'Neill.—The peculiarity and the strong hold of Mrs. Siddons' acting was, that she, in a wonderful manner, united both the extremes of acting here spoken of,—that is, all the frailties of passion, with all the strength and resources of the intellect.

MR. KEAN'S IAGO.

The Examiner. *July* 24, 1814.

We regretted some time ago, that we could only get a casual glimpse of Mr. Kean in the character of Iago; we have since been more fortunate, and we certainly think his performance of the part

one of the most extraordinary exhibitions on the stage. There is no one within our remembrance, who has so completely foiled the critics as this celebrated actor: one sagacious person imagines that he must perform a part in a certain manner; another virtuoso chalks out a different path for him; and when the time comes, he does the whole off in a way, that neither of them had the least conception of, and which both of them are therefore very ready to condemn as entirely wrong. It was ever the trick of genius to be thus. We confess that Mr. Kean has thrown us out more than once. For instance, we are very much inclined to persist in the objection we before made, that his Richard is not gay enough, and that his Iago is not grave enough. This he may perhaps conceive to be the mere caprice of captious criticism; but we will try to give our reasons, and shall leave them to Mr. Kean's better judgment.

It is to be remembered, then, that Richard was a princely villain, borne along in a sort of triumphal car of royal state, buoyed up with the hopes and privileges of his birth, reposing even on the sanctity of religion, trampling on his devoted victims without remorse, and who looked out and laughed from the high watch-tower of his confidence and his expectations, on the desolation and misery he had caused around him. He held on his way, unquestioned, 'hedged in with the divinity of kings,' amenable to no tribunal, and abusing his power *in contempt of mankind.* But as for Iago, we conceive differently of him. He had not the same natural advantages. He was a mere adventurer in mischief, a pains-taking, plodding knave, without patent or pedigree, who was obliged to work his uphill way by wit, not by will, and to be the founder of his own fortune. He was, if we may be allowed a vulgar allusion, a true prototype of modern Jacobinism, who thought that talents ought to decide the place; a man of 'morbid sensibility' (in the fashionable phrase), full of distrust, of hatred, of anxious and corroding thoughts, and who, though he might assume a temporary superiority over others by superior adroitness, and pride himself in his skill, could not be supposed to assume it as a matter of course, as if he had been entitled to it from his birth.

We do not here mean to enter into the characters of the two men, but something must be allowed to the difference of their situations. There might be the same indifference in both as to the end in view, but there could not well be the same security as to the success of the means. Iago had to pass through a different ordeal: he had no appliances and means to boot; no royal road to the completion of his tragedy. His pretensions were not backed by authority; they were not baptized at the font; they were not holy-water proof. He had the whole to answer for in his own person, and could not shift the

responsibility to the heads of others. Mr. Kean's Richard was therefore, we think, deficient in something of that regal jollity and reeling triumph of success which the part would bear; but this we can easily account for, because it is the traditional common-place idea of the character, that he is to 'play the dog—to bite and snarl.'—The extreme unconcern and laboured levity of his Iago, on the contrary, is a refinement and original device of the actor's own mind, and deserves a distinct consideration. The character of Iago, in fact, belongs to a class of characters common to Shakespear, and at the same time peculiar to him, namely, that of great intellectual activity, accompanied with a total want of moral principle, and therefore displaying itself at the constant expence of others, making use of reason as a pander to will—employing its ingenuity and its resources to palliate its own crimes, and aggravate the faults of others, and seeking to confound the practical distinctions of right and wrong, by referring them to some overstrained standard of speculative refinement.

Some persons more nice than wise, have thought the whole of the character of Iago unnatural. Shakespear, who was quite as good a philosopher as he was a poet, thought otherwise. He knew that the love of power, which is another name for the love of mischief, was natural to man. He would know this as well or better than if it had been demonstrated to him by a logical diagram, merely from seeing children paddle in the dirt, or kill flies for sport. We might ask those who think the character of Iago not natural, why they go to see it performed—but from the interest it excites, the sharper edge which it sets on their curiosity and imagination? Why do we go to see tragedies in general? Why do we always read the accounts in the newspapers, of dreadful fires and shocking murders, but for the same reason? Why do so many persons frequent executions and trials; or why do the lower classes almost universally take delight in barbarous sports and cruelty to animals, but because there is a natural tendency in the mind to strong excitement, a desire to have its faculties roused and stimulated to the utmost? Whenever this principle is not under the restraint of humanity or the sense of moral obligation, there are no excesses to which it will not of itself give rise, without the assistance of any other motive, either of passion or self-interest. Iago is only an extreme instance of the kind; that is, of diseased intellectual activity, with an almost perfect indifference to moral good or evil, or rather with a preference of the latter, because it falls more in with his favourite propensity, gives greater zest to his thoughts and scope to his actions. Be it observed, too, (for the sake of those who are for squaring all human actions by the

maxims of Rochefoucault), that he is quite or nearly as indifferent to his own fate as to that of others; that he runs all risks for a trifling and doubtful advantage; and is himself the dupe and victim of his ruling passion—an incorrigible love of mischief—an insatiable craving after action of the most difficult and dangerous kind. Our Ancient is a philosopher, who fancies that a lie that kills, has more point in it than an alliteration or an antithesis; who thinks a fatal experiment on the peace of a family a better thing than watching the palpitations in the heart of a flea in an air-pump; who plots the ruin of his friends as an exercise for his understanding, and stabs men in the dark to prevent *ennui*. Now this, though it be sport, yet it is dreadful sport. There is no room for trifling and indifference, nor scarcely for the appearance of it; the very object of his whole plot is to keep his faculties stretched on the rack, in a state of watch and ward, in a sort of breathless suspense, without a moment's interval of repose. He has a desperate stake to play for, like a man who fences with poisoned weapons, and has business enough on his hands to call for the whole stock of his sober circumspection, his dark duplicity, and insidious gravity. He resembles a man who sits down to play at chess, for the sake of the difficulty and complication of the game, and who immediately becomes absorbed in it. His amusements, if they are amusements, are severe and saturnine—even his wit blisters. His gaiety arises from the success of his treachery; his ease from the sense of the torture he has inflicted on others. Even if other circumstances permitted it, the part he has to play with Othello requires that he should assume the most serious concern, and something of the plausibility of a confessor. 'His cue is villanous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam.' He is repeatedly called 'honest Iago,' which looks as if there were something suspicious in his appearance, which admitted a different construction. The tone which he adopts in the scenes with Roderigo, Desdemona, and Cassio, is only a relaxation from the more arduous business of the play. Yet there is in all his conversation, an inveterate misanthropy, a licentious keenness of perception, which is always sagacious of evil, and snuffs up the tainted scent of its quarry with rancorous delight. An exuberance of spleen is the essence of the character. The view which we have here taken of the subject, (if at all correct) will not therefore justify the extreme alteration which Mr. Kean has introduced into the part.

Actors in general have been struck only with the wickedness of the character, and have exhibited an assassin going to the place of execution. Mr. Kean has abstracted the wit of the character, and makes Iago appear throughout an excellent good fellow, and lively

bottle-companion. But though we do not wish him to be represented as a monster, or a fiend, we see no reason why he should instantly be converted into a pattern of comic gaiety and good humour. The light which illumines the character, should rather resemble the flashes of lightning in the mirky sky, which make the darkness more terrible. Mr. Kean's Iago is, we suspect, too much in the sun. His manner of acting the part would have suited better with the character of Edmund in King Lear, who, though in other respects much the same, has a spice of gallantry in his constitution, and has the favour and countenance of the ladies, which always gives a man the smug appearance of a bridegroom!—We shall in another article, illustrate these remarks by a reference to some passages in the text itself.

MR KEAN'S IAGO.

(concluded)

The Examiner. *Aug.* 7, 1814.

The general groundwork of the character of Iago, as it appears to us, is not absolute malignity, but a want of moral principle, or an indifference to the real consequences of the actions, which the meddling perversity of his disposition and love of immediate excitement lead him to commit. He is an amateur of tragedy in real life; and instead of exercising his ingenuity on imaginary characters, or forgotten incidents, he takes the bolder and more desperate course of getting up his plot at home, casts the principal parts among his nearest friends and connections, and rehearses it in downright earnest, with steady nerves and unabated resolution. The character is a complete abstraction of the intellectual from the moral being; or, in other words, consists in an absorption of every common feeling in the virulence of his understanding, the deliberate wilfulness of his purposes, and in his restless, untamable love of mischievous contrivance. We proceed to quote some particular passages in support of this opinion.

In the general dialogue and reflections, which are an accompaniment to the progress of the catastrophe, there is a constant overflowing of gall and bitterness. The acuteness of his malice fastens upon every thing alike, and pursues the most distant analogies of evil with a provoking sagacity. He by no means forms an exception to his own rule:—

> 'Who has that breast so pure,
> But some uncleanly apprehensions
> Keep leets and law-days, and in sessions sit
> With meditations lawful?'

His mirth is not natural and cheerful, but forced and extravagant, partaking of the intense activity of mind and cynical contempt of others in which it originates. Iago is not, like Candide, a believer in optimism, but seems to have a thorough hatred or distrust of every thing of the kind, and to dwell with gloating satisfaction on whatever can interrupt the enjoyment of others, and gratify his moody irritability. One of his most characteristic speeches is that immediately after the marriage of Othello:—

> '*Roderigo.* What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,
> If he can carry her thus?
> *Iago.* Call up her father:
> Rouse him [*Othello*], make after him, poison his delight,
> Proclaim him in the streets, incense her kinsmen,
> And tho' he in a fertile climate dwell,
> Plague him with flies: tho' that his joy be joy,
> Yet throw such changes of vexation on't,
> As it may lose some colour.'

The pertinacious logical following up of his favourite principle in this passage, is admirable. In the next, his imagination runs riot in the mischief he is plotting, and breaks out into the wildness and impetuosity of real enthusiasm:—

> '*Roderigo.* Here is her father's house, I'll call aloud.
> *Iago.* Do, with like timorous accent and dire yell,
> As when, by night and negligence, the fire
> Is spied in populous cities.'

There is nothing here of the trim levity and epigrammatic conciseness of Mr. Kean's manner of acting the part; which is no less paradoxical than Mrs. Greville's celebrated Ode to Indifference. Iago was a man of genius, and not a *petit maitre.* One of his most frequent topics, on which he is rich indeed, and in descanting on which, his spleen serves him for a muse, is the disproportionate match between Desdemona and the Moor. This is brought forward in the first scene, and is never lost sight of afterwards.

> '*Brabantio.* What is the reason of this terrible summons?
> *Iago.* Sir, you're robb'd; for shame, put on your gown;
> Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul:
> ——————————Arise, arise,
> Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
> Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you.
> Arise, I say.'—[*And so on to the end of the passage.*]

Now, all this goes on springs well oiled: Mr. Kean's mode of

giving the passage had the tightness of a drumhead, and was muffled (perhaps purposely so) into the bargain.

This is a clue to the character of the lady which Iago is not at all ready to part with. He recurs to it again in the second act, when in answer to his insinuations against Desdemona, Roderigo says,—

> 'I cannot believe that in her—she 's full of most bless'd conditions.
> *Iago.* Bless'd fig's end. The wine she drinks is made of grapes. If she had been bless'd, she would never have loved the Moor.'

And again, with still more effect and spirit afterwards, when he takes advantage of this very suggestion arising in Othello's own breast:—

> '*Othello.* And yet how nature erring from itself—
> *Iago.* Aye, there 's the point;—as, to be bold with you,
> Not to affect many proposed matches,
> Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
> Whereto we see in all things, Nature tends;
> Foh! one may smell in such, a will most rank,
> Foul disproportions, thoughts unnatural.'

This is probing to the quick. 'Our Ancient' here turns the character of poor Desdemona, as it were, inside out. It is certain that nothing but the genius of Shakespear could have preserved the entire interest and delicacy of the part, and have even drawn an additional elegance and dignity from the peculiar circumstances in which she is placed. The character indeed has always had the greatest charm for minds of the finest sensibility.

For our own part, we are a little of Iago's council in this matter; and all circumstances considered, and platonics out of the question, if we were to cast the complexion of Desdemona physiognomically, we should say that she had a very fair skin, and very light auburn hair, inclining to yellow! We at the same time give her infinite credit for purity and delicacy of sentiment; but it so happens that purity and grossness sometimes

> 'nearly are allied,
> And thin partitions do their bounds divide.'

Yet the reverse does not hold; so uncertain and undefinable a thing is moral character! It is no wonder that Iago had some contempt for it, 'who knew all quantities of human dealings, with a learned spirit.' There is considerable gaiety and ease in his dialogue with Emilia and Desdemona on their landing. It is then holiday time with him; but yet the general satire will be acknowledged (at least

by one half of our readers) to be biting enough, and his idea of his own character is finely expressed in what he says to Desdemona, when she asks him how he would praise her—

> 'Oh gentle lady, do not put me to it,
> For I am nothing, if not critical.'

Mr. Kean's execution of this part we thought admirable; but he was quite as much at his ease in every other part of the play, which was done (we know not why) in a single key.

The habitual licentiousness of Iago's conversation is not to be traced to the pleasure he takes in gross or lascivious images, but to a desire of finding out the worst side of every thing, and of proving himself an over-match for appearances. He has none of 'the milk of human kindness' in his composition. His imagination refuses every thing that has not a strong infusion of the most unpalatable ingredients, and his moral constitution digests only poisons. Virtue, or goodness, or whatever has the least 'relish of salvation in it,' is, to his depraved appetite, sickly and insipid; and he even resents the good opinion entertained of his own integrity, as if it were an affront cast on the masculine sense and spirit of his character. Thus, at the meeting between Othello and Desdemona, he exclaims—'Oh, you are well tuned now: but I'll set down the pegs that make this music, *as honest as I am*'—deriving an indirect triumph over the want of penetration in others from the consciousness of his own villainy.

In most of the passages which we have hitherto quoted, Iago gives a loose to his passion for theoretical evil: in the scenes with Othello, where he has to put his theory in practice, with great risk to himself, and with dreadful consequences to others, he is proportionably guarded, insidious, dark and deliberate. In the very first scene with Othello, he takes a very different tone;—that tone of hypocritical virtue and affected delicacy, which always betrays the want of the reality.

> '*Enter Othello, Iago, and Attendants.*
>
> *Iago.* Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
> Yet do I hold it very stuff o' th' conscience,
> To do no contriv'd murder. I lack iniquity
> Sometimes to do me service. Nine or ten times
> I thought to have jerk'd him here under the ribs.
> *Othello.* 'Tis better as it is.
> *Iago.* Nay, but he prated,
> And spoke such scurvy and provoking terms
> Against your honour, that with the little godliness I have
> I did full hard forbear him.'

But the part in which, according to our conception, Mr. Kean failed most, was in the third act with Othello, where 'comes the tug of war.' The following passage is, we think, decisive to our purpose:—

'*Iago.* My noble lord.
Othello. What dost thou say, Iago?
Iago. Did Michael Cassio,
When you woo'd my lady, know of your love?
Othello. He did from first to last.
Why dost thou ask?
Iago. But for a satisfaction of my thought,
No further harm.
Othello. Why of thy thought, Iago?
Iago. I did not think he had been acquainted with it.
Othello. O yes, and went between us very oft—
Iago. Indeed!
Othello. Indeed! Ay, indeed. Discern'st thou aught of that?
Is he not honest?
Iago. Honest, my Lord?
Othello. Honest? Ay, honest.
Iago. My Lord, for aught I know.
Othello. What dost thou think?
Iago. Think, my Lord!
Othello. Think, my Lord! Alas, thou echo'st me,
As if there were some monster in thy thought
Too hideous to be shewn. Thou dost mean something:
I heard thee say even now, thou lik'dst not that—
When Cassio left my wife. What did'st not like?
And when I told thee, he was of my counsel,
Of my whole course of wooing; thou criedst, indeed!
And didst contract and purse thy brow together,
As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain
Some horrible conceit: If thou dost love me,
Shew me thy thought.
Iago. My Lord, you know I love you.
Othello. I think thou dost:
And for I know thou 'rt full of love and honesty,
And weigh'st thy words before thou giv'st them breath,
Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more:
For such things in a false disloyal knave
Are tricks of custom: but in a man that 's just,
They 're cold dilations working from the heart,
Which passion cannot rule.'

Now, if there is any thing of superficial gaiety or heedlessness in this, 'it is not written in the bond:'—the breaks and stops, the pursing and knitting of the brow together, the deep internal working

of hypocrisy under the mask of love and honesty, escaped us on the stage.—The same observation applies to what he says afterwards of himself:—

> 'Though I perchance am vicious in my guess,
> As I confess it is my nature's plague
> To spy into abuses, and oft my jealousy
> Shapes faults that are not.'

The candour of this confession would hardly be extorted from him, if it did not correspond with the moody dissatisfaction, and suspicious, creeping, cat-like watchfulness of his general appearance. The anxious suspense, the deep artifice, the collected earnestness, and, if we may so say, the *passion* of hypocrisy, are decidedly marked in every line of the whole scene, and are worked up to a sort of paroxysm afterwards, in that inimitably characteristic apostrophe:—

> 'O Grace! O Heaven forgive me!
> Are you a man? Have you a soul or sense?
> God be wi' you: take mine office. O wretched fool
> That lov'st to make thine honesty a vice!
> Oh monstrous world! take note, take note, O world!
> To be direct and honest, is not safe.
> I thank you for this profit, and from hence
> I'll love no friend, since love breeds such offence.'

This burst of hypocritical indignation might well have called forth all Mr. Kean's powers, but it did not. We might multiply passages of the same kind, if we had time.

The philosophy of the character is strikingly unfolded in the part where Iago gets the handkerchief:—

> 'This may do something.
> The Moor already changes with my poisons,
> Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
> But with a little act upon the blood,
> Burn like the mines of sulphur.'

We here find him watching the success of his experiment, with the sanguine anticipation of an alchemist at the moment of projection.

> 'I did say so:
> Look where he comes'—[*Enter Othello*]—'Not poppy nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou ow'dst yesterday.'

Again he says:—

> 'Work on:
> My medicine works; thus credulous fools are caught,
> And many worthy and chaste dames even thus
> All guiltless meet reproach.'

So that after all, he would persuade us that his object is only to give an instructive example of the injustice that prevails in the world.

If he is bad enough when he has business on his hands, he is still worse when his purposes are suspended, and he has only to reflect on the misery he has occasioned. His indifference when Othello falls in a trance, is perfectly diabolical, but perfectly in character:—

> '*Iago.* How is it, General? Have you not hurt your head?
> *Othello.* Dost thou mock me?
> *Iago.* I mock you not, by heaven,' &c.

The callous levity which Mr. Kean seems to consider as belonging to the character in general, is proper here, because Iago has no feelings connected with humanity; but he has other feelings and other passions of his own, which are not to be trifled with.

We do not, however, approve of Mr. Kean's pointing to the dead bodies after the catastrophe. It is not in the character of the part, which consists in the love of mischief, not as an end, but as a means, and when that end is attained, though he may feel no remorse, he would feel no triumph. Besides, it is not the text of Shakespear. Iago does not point to the bed, but Ludovico bids him look at it:—'Look on the tragic loading of this bed,' &c.

We have already noticed that Edmund the Bastard is like an episode of the same character, placed in less difficult circumstances. Zanga is a vulgar caricature of it.

MR. KEAN'S RICHARD II.

The Examiner. *March* 19, 1815.

We are not in the number of those who are anxious in recommending the getting-up of Shakespear's plays in general, as a duty which our stage-managers owe equally to the author, and the reader of those wonderful compositions. The representing the very finest of them on the stage, even by the best actors, is, we apprehend, an abuse of the genius of the poet, and even in those of a second-rate class, the quantity of sentiment and imagery greatly outweighs the immediate impression of the situation and story. Not only are the more refined

poetical beauties and minuter strokes of character lost to the audience, but the most striking and impressive passages, those which having once read we can never forget, fail comparatively of their effect, except in one or two rare instances indeed. It is only the *pantomime* part of tragedy, the exhibition of immediate and physical distress, that which gives the greatest opportunity for 'inexpressible dumb-show and noise,' which is sure to tell, and tell completely on the stage. All the rest, all that appeals to our profounder feelings, to reflection and imagination, all that affects us most deeply in our closets, and in fact constitutes the glory of Shakespear, is little else than an interruption and a drag on the business of the stage. *Segnius per aures demissa*, &c. Those parts of the play on which the reader dwells the longest, and with the highest relish in the perusal, are hurried through in the performance, while the most trifling and exceptionable are obtruded on his notice, and occupy as much time as the most important. We do not mean to say that there is less knowledge or display of mere stage-effect in Shakespear than in other writers, but that there is a much greater knowledge and display of other things, which divide the attention with it, and to which it is not possible to give an equal force in the representation. Hence it is, that the reader of the plays of Shakespear is almost always disappointed in seeing them acted; and, for our own parts, we should never go to see them acted, if we could help it.

Shakespear has embodied his characters so very distinctly, that he stands in no need of the actor's assistance to make them more distinct; and the representation of the character on the stage almost uniformly interferes with our conception of the character itself. The only exceptions we can recollect to this observation, are Mrs. Siddons and Mr. Kean—the former of whom in one or two characters, and the latter, not certainly in any one character, but in very many passages, have raised our imagination of the part they acted. It may be asked then, why all great actors chuse characters from Shakespear to come out in; and again, why these become their favourite parts? First, it is not that they are able to exhibit their author, but that he enables them to shew themselves off. The only way in which Shakespear appears to greater advantage on the stage than common writers is, that he stimulates the faculties of the actor more. If he is a sensible man, he perceives how much he has to do, the inequalities he has to contend with, and he exerts himself accordingly; he puts himself at full speed, and lays all his resources under contribution; he attempts more, and makes a greater number of brilliant failures; he plays off all the tricks of his art to mimic the poet; he does all he can, and bad is often the best. We

have before said that there are some few exceptions. If the genius of Shakespear does not shine out undiminished in the actor, we perceive certain effects and refractions of it in him. If the oracle does not speak quite intelligibly, yet we perceive that the priest at the altar is inspired with the god, or possessed with a demon. To speak our minds at once, we believe that in acting Shakespear there is a greater number of good things marred than in acting any other author. In fact, in going to see the plays of Shakespear, it would be ridiculous to suppose, that any one ever went to see Hamlet or Othello represented by Kean or Kemble; we go to see Kean or Kemble in Hamlet or Othello. On the contrary, Miss O'Neill and Mrs. Beverley are, we take it, one and the same person. As to the second point, viz. that Shakespear's characters are decidedly favourites on the stage in the same proportion as they are in the closet, we deny it altogether. They either do not tell so much, or very little more than many others. Mrs. Siddons was quite as great in Mrs. Beverley and Isabella as in Lady Macbeth or Queen Katherine: yet no one, we apprehend, will say that the poetry is equal. It appears, therefore, not that the most intellectual characters excite most interest on the stage, but that they are objects of greater curiosity; they are nicer tests of the skill of the actor, and afford greater scope for controversy, how far the sentiment is 'overdone or come tardy off.' There is more in this circumstance than people in general are aware of. We have no hesitation in saying, for instance, that Miss O'Neill has more popularity *in the house* than Mr. Kean. It is quite as certain, that he is more thought of *out of it*. The reason is, that she is not 'food for the critics,' whereas Mr. Kean notoriously is; there is no end of the topics he affords for discussion —for praise and blame.

All that we have said of acting in general applies to his Richard II. It has been supposed that this is his finest part: this is, however, a total misrepresentation. There are only one or two electrical shocks given in it; and in many of his characters he gives a much greater number.—The excellence of his acting is in proportion to the number of hits, for he has not equal truth or purity of style. Richard II. was hardly given correctly as to the general outline. Mr. Kean made it a character of *passion*, that is, of feeling combined with energy; whereas it is a character of *pathos*, that is to say, of feeling combined with weakness. This, we conceive, is the general fault of Mr. Kean's acting, that it is always energetic or nothing. He is always on full stretch—never relaxed. He expresses all the violence, the extravagance, and fierceness of the passions, but not their misgivings, their helplessness, and sinkings into despair. He has too

much of that strong nerve and fibre that is always equally elastic. We might instance to the present purpose, his dashing the glass down with all his might, in the scene with Hereford, instead of letting it fall out of his hands, as from an infant's; also, his manner of expostulating with Bolingbroke, 'Why on thy knee, thus low, &c.' which was altogether fierce and heroic, instead of being sad, thoughtful, and melancholy. If Mr. Kean would look into some passages in this play, into that in particular, 'Oh that I were a mockery king of snow, to melt away before the sun of Bolingbroke,' he would find a clue to this character, and to human nature in general, which he seems to have missed—how far feeling is connected with the sense of weakness as well as of strength, or the power of imbecility, and the force of passiveness.

We never saw Mr. Kean look better than when we saw him in Richard II. and his voice appeared to us to be stronger. We saw him near, which is always in his favour; and we think one reason why the Editor of this Paper [1] was disappointed in first seeing this celebrated actor, was his being at a considerable distance from the stage. We feel persuaded that on a nearer and more frequent view of him, he will agree that he is a perfectly original, and sometimes a perfectly natural actor; that if his conception is not always just or profound, his execution is masterly; that where he is not the very character he assumes, he makes a most brilliant rehearsal of it: that he never wants energy, ingenuity, and animation, though he is often deficient in dignity, grace, and tenderness; that if he frequently disappoints us in those parts where we expect him to do most, he as frequently surprises us by striking out unexpected beauties of his own; and that the objectionable parts of his acting arise chiefly from the physical impediments he has to overcome.

Of the other characters of the play, it is needless to say much. Mr. Pope was respectable in John of Gaunt. Mr. Holland was lamentable in the Duke of York, and Mr. Elliston indifferent in Bolingbroke. This alteration of Richard II. is the best that has been attempted; for it consists entirely of omissions, except one or two scenes which are idly tacked on to the conclusion.

THE UNKNOWN GUEST

The Examiner. *April* 2, 1815.

The English Drama has made an acquisition of no less than three new pieces in the course of the week. The Unknown Guest (said to be from the pen of Mr. Arnold, the Manager) is, we suppose, to

[1] The Examiner.

be considered as a dramatic trifle: it is one of the longest and dullest trifles we almost ever remember to have sat out. We think in general, that the practice of making the Manager bring out his own pieces on the stage, is a custom which would be 'more honoured in the breach than the observance:' it is offering a premium for the rejection of better pieces than his own. In the present instance, it would be a compliment to say, that the author has failed in wit, character, incident, or sentiment; for he has not attempted any thing of the kind. The dialogue bears no proportion in quantity to the songs; and chiefly serves as a vehicle to tack together a certain number of unmeaning lines, arranged for different voices, and set in our opinion to very indifferent music. The music of this Opera professes to be by Mr. Kelly and Mr. Braham, except that of one song, which is modestly said to be—selected;—a title which we apprehend might be extended to the whole. We do not recollect a single movement in the airs composed by Mr. Kelly, which was not familiar even to vulgarity; and the style of Mr. Braham's songs has no other object than to pamper him in his peculiar vices, and to produce that *mannerism*, which is the destruction of all excellence in art. There are two or three favourite passages which seem to dwell upon his ear, and to which he gives a striking expression; these he combines and repeats with laborious foolery; and in fact, sings nothing but himself over and over continually. Nothing can be worse than this affected and selfish monotony. Instead of acquiring new and varied resources, by lending his imagination to the infinite combinations of which music is susceptible, and by fairly entering into his subject, all his ideas of excellence are taken from, and confined to the sound of his own voice. It is on this account that we listen to Mr. Braham's singing with less pleasure than we formerly did. It is not assuredly that Mr. Braham has fallen off in his singing; on the contrary, he has improved and perfected his particular talent, but we constantly know what we have to expect, or rather to apprehend, for this anticipation at last amounts to apprehension: we perceive a limit, and this perception is always painful, where it seems to arise from any thing wilful or systematic. Those who first hear Mr. Braham, are struck with a noble simplicity and fervour in his manner of expressing certain emotions, in the eagerness with which he seems to fling himself into his subject, disdaining the rules of art, like the combatant who rushes without his armour to the battle: the sounds he utters, appear to rend his own bosom, or at other times, linger in fluttering accents on his lips. The communication between the voice and the feelings is immediate, instantaneous, irresistible; and the language of music seems the language of nature and passion.

But when the sound becomes not only an echo to the sense, but to itself—when the same alternation of bursts of heroic passion, and thrillings of sentimental tenderness is constantly played off upon us —when there is nothing but this trite transition from the *con furio, con strepito*, to the *affettuoso* and *adagio* style, in their greatest extremes —we then begin to perceive something like a trick, and are little more affected than by reading the marginal directions in a music book. The inspiration of genius is fled; that which before breathed the very soul of music, becomes little better than a puppet, and like all other puppets, is good only according to its compass, and the number of evolutions it performs. We have here spoken of directness and simplicity of style, as Mr. Braham's *forte* in singing; for though we agree that he has too much ornament (a very little is too much), yet we can by no means allow that this can be made an unqualified objection to his style, for he has much less than other singers.

Of Mr. Phillips we would not wish to speak; but as he puts himself forward and is put forward by others, we must say something. He is said to be an imitator of Mr. Braham; if so, the imitation is a vile one. This gentleman has one qualification, which has been said to be the great secret of pleasing others, that he is evidently pleased with himself. But he does not produce a corresponding effect upon us; we have not one particle of sympathy with his wonderful self-complacency. We should wish never to hear him sing again; or, if he must sing, at least, we should hope never to see him act: let him not top his part—why should he sigh, and ogle, and languish, and display all his accomplishments—he should spare the side-boxes!—Mrs. Dickons never appeared to us any thing but an ordinary musical instrument, and at present, she is very much out of tune. We do not well understand what has been said of this piece having called forth all the musical strength of the house: except Braham's, there was not a single song sung so as not to give pain, even to a moderately cultivated ear. In this censure, we do not (of course) include Miss Kelly; in seeing her, we never think of her singing. The comic parts of this Opera (if such they can be called) were sustained by Miss Kelly, Mr. Munden, and Mr. Knight. Miss Kelly did the little she had to do, with that fine unobtrusive good sense, and reluctant *naiveté*, which distinguish all her performances. If she carries her shyness of the audience and of her profession to a fault, not so Mr. Munden. He out-caricatures caricature, and outgrimaces himself. We have seen him twice lately in the same character of a drunken confidant, and were both times heartily tired. He is not only perfectly conscious what he is about, but has a thorough understanding with the audience all along. He makes his

face up into a bad joke, and flings it right in the teeth of the spectators. The expression of the masks hanging out at the shop-windows, is less extravagant and distorted. There is no one on the stage who can, or at least who does, draw up his eyebrows, roll his eyes, thrust out his tongue, or drop his under jaw, in so astonishing a manner as Mr. Munden; and if acting consisted in making wry faces, he would be the greatest actor on the stage, instead of which he is, on these occasions, only a bad clown. His over-desire to produce effect, destroys all effect on our minds.[1]—Mr. Knight played the servant very well; but in general, there is too much an appearance in his acting, as if he was moved by wires. His feeling always flies to the extremities: his vivacity is in his feet and finger-ends. He is a very lively automaton.

March 30.

The farce of Love in Limbo, brought out at Covent-Garden Theatre, has no other merit than the plot, which, however, is neither very laughable nor very probable.—The melo-drame of Zembuca, besides the attractions of the scenery and music, has considerable neatness of point in the dialogue, to which Liston gave its full effect.

MR. KEAN'S ZANGA

The Examiner. *May* 28, 1815.

Mr. Kean played for his benefit on Wednesday, the character of Zanga, in the Revenge (which he is to repeat), and the character of Abel Drugger from the Alchymist, (we are sorry to say for that night only). The house was crowded to excess. The play of the Revenge is an obvious transposition of Othello: the two principal characters are the same; only their colours are reversed. The giving the dark, treacherous, fierce, and remorseless character to the Moor, is an alteration, which is more in conformity to our prejudices, as well as to historical truth. We have seen Mr. Kean in no part, to which his general style of acting is so completely adapted as to this, or to which he has given greater spirit and effect. He had all the wild impetuosity of barbarous revenge, the glowing energy of the untamed children of the sun, whose blood drinks up the radiance of fiercer skies. He was like a man stung with rage, and bursting with stifled passions. His hurried motions had the restlessness of the panther's: his wily caution, his cruel eye, his quivering visage, his

[1] It will be seen, that this severe censure of Munden is nearly reversed in the sequel of these remarks, and on a better acquaintance with this very able actor in characters more worthy of his powers.

violent gestures, his hollow pauses, his abrupt transitions, were all in character. The very vices of Mr. Kean's general acting might almost be said to assist him in the part. What in our judgment he wants, is dignified repose, and deep internal sentiment. But in Zanga, nothing of this kind is required. The whole character is violent; the whole expression is in action. The only passage which struck us as one of calm and philosophical grandeur, and in which Mr. Kean failed from an excess of misplaced energy, was the one in the conclusion, where he describes the tortures he is about to undergo, and expresses his contempt for them. Certainly, the predominant feeling here is that of stern, collected, impenetrable fortitude, and the expression given to it should not be that of a pantomimic exaggeration of the physical horrors to which he professes to rise superior. The mind in such a situation recoils upon itself, summons up its own powers and resources, and should seem to await the blow of fate with the stillness of death. The scene in which he discloses himself to Alonzo, and insults over his misery, was terrific: the attitude in which he tramples on the body of his prostrate victim, was not the less dreadful from its being perfectly beautiful. Among the finest instances of natural expression, were the manner in which he interrupts himself in his relation to Alonzo, 'I knew you could not bear it,' and his reflection when he sees that Alonzo is dead—'And so is my revenge.' The play should end here: the soliloquy afterwards is a mere drawling piece of common-place morality. We ought to add, that Mr. Rae acted the part of Alonzo with great force and feeling.

Mr. Kean's Abel Drugger was an exquisite piece of ludicrous *naiveté*. The first word he utters, '*Sure*,' drew bursts of laughter and applause. The mixture of simplicity and cunning in the character could not be given with a more whimsical effect. First, there was the wonder of the poor Tobacconist, when he is told by the Conjurer that his name is Abel, and that he was born on a Wednesday; then the conflict between his apprehensions and his cupidity, as he becomes more convinced that Subtle is a person who has dealings with the devil; and lastly, his contrivances to get all the information he can, without paying for it. His distress is at the height, when the two-guinea pocket-piece is found upon him: 'He had received it from his grandmother, and would fain save it for his grand children.' The battle between him and Face (Oxberry) was irresistible; and he went off after he had got well through it, strutting, and fluttering his cloak about, much in the same manner that a game cock flaps his wings after a victory. We wish he would do it again!

MR. BANNISTER'S FAREWELL

The Examiner. *June* 4, 1815.

Mr. Bannister had the comedy of The World, and the after-piece of The Children in the Wood, for his benefit on Thursday last, at Drury-Lane. Mr. Gattie, in consequence of the indisposition of Mr. Dowton, undertook the part of Index in the play. This alteration occasioned a short interruption; but after the usual explanation, the piece proceeded, and in our opinion, Mr. Gattie made a very excellent representative of the busy, whiffling, insignificant, but good-natured character which he personated. The figure and manner of this actor are certainly better fitted for the part than those of Dowton, who has too much weight and sturdiness of mind and body, to run about on ladies' errands, and take an interest in every thing that does not concern him. He is not a Will Wimble. Mr. Bannister played the character of Echo, which is a whimsical mixture of simplicity, affectation, and good-nature, with his usual excellence. Mr. Elliston's Cheviot is one of his best characters. Whatever requires spirit, animation, or the lively expression of natural feelings, he does well. Sentimental comedy is the equivocal reflection of tragedy in common life, and Mr. Elliston can rehearse the one just well enough to play the other. The coincidence is complete. He raises his voice to a pitch of romantic rapture, or lowers it to the tones of sullen despondence and disappointment, with the happiest effect. The Duke, in the Honey-Moon, is the *assumption* of an impassioned character. The Comedy of the World, is one of the most ingenious and amusing of the modern stage. It has great neatness of dialogue, and considerable originality, as well as sprightliness of character. It is, however, chargeable with a grossness which is common to modern plays, we mean, the grossness of fashionable life in the men, and the grossness of fine sentiment in the women. Mrs. Davison did not soften down the exuberant qualities of Lady Bloomfield into any thing like decency; and the two fashionable loungers, Loiter and Dauntless, were certainly done to the life by Decamp and R. Palmer. Between the acts, Mr. Braham sung Robin Adair, and The Death of Nelson, in his most delightful style.

In the after-piece, Mr. Bannister played the favourite part of Walter, in the Children in the Wood, for the last time.

He then came forward to take his leave of the Stage, in a Farewell Address, in which he expressed his thanks for the long and flattering patronage he had received from the public. We do not wonder that his feelings were overpowered on this occasion: our own (we confess it) were nearly so too. We remember him in the first hey-day of

our youthful spirits, in The Prize—which he played so delightfully with that fine old croaker Suett, and Madame Storace—in the farce of My Grandmother, in the Son-in-Law, in Autolycus, and in Scrub, in which our satisfaction was at its height. At that time, King, and Parsons, and Dodd, and Quick, and Edwin, were in the full vigour of their reputation, who are now all gone! We still feel the vivid delight with which we used to see their names in the play-bills, as we went along to the theatre. Bannister was almost the last of these that remained; and we parted with him as we should with one of our oldest and best friends. The most pleasant feature in the profession of a player, and which is peculiar to it, is, that we not only admire the talents of those who adorn it, but we contract a personal intimacy with them. There is no class of society whom so many persons regard with affection as actors. We greet them on the stage; we like to meet them in the streets; they always recall to us pleasant associations; and we feel our gratitude excited, without the uneasiness of a sense of obligation. The very gaiety and popularity, however, which surrounds the life of a favourite performer, makes the retiring from it a very serious business. It glances a mortifying reflection on the shortness of human life, and the vanity of human pleasures. Something reminds us, that 'all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.'

COMUS

The Examiner. June 11, 1815.

Comus has been got up at Covent-Garden Theatre with great splendour, and has had as much success as was to be expected. The genius of Milton was essentially *undramatic*: he saw all objects from his own point of view, and with certain exclusive preferences. Shakespear, on the contrary, had no personal character, and no moral principle, except that of good-nature. He took no part in the scene he describes, but gave fair play to all his characters, and left virtue and vice, folly and wisdom, right and wrong, to fight it out between themselves, just as they do on their 'old prize-fighting stage'—the world. He is only the vehicle for the sentiments of his characters. Milton's characters are only a vehicle for his own. Comus is a didactic poem, or a dialogue in verse, on the advantages or disadvantages of virtue and vice. It is merely a discussion of general topics, but with a beauty of language and richness of illustration, that in the perusal leave no feeling of the want of any more powerful interest. On the stage, the poetry of course lost above half of its

effect: but this was compensated to the audience by every advantage of scenery and decoration. By the help of dance and song, 'of mask and antique pageantry,' this most delightful poem went off as well as any common pantomime. Mr. Conway topped the part of Comus with his usual felicity, and seemed almost as if the genius of a maypole had inspired a human form. He certainly gives a totally new idea of the character. We allow him to be 'a marvellous proper man,' but we see nothing of the magician, or the son of Bacchus and Circe in him. He is said to make a very handsome Comus: so he would make a very handsome Caliban; and the common sense of the transformation would be the same. Miss Stephens played the First Nymph very prettily and insipidly; and Miss Matthews played the Second Nymph with appropriate significance of nods and smiles. Mrs. Faucit, as the Lady, rehearsed the speeches in praise of virtue very well, and acted the scene of the Enchanted Chair admirably. She seemed changed into a statue of alabaster. Miss Foote made a very elegant Younger Brother.—It is only justice to add, that Mr. Duruset gave the songs of the Spirit with equal taste and effect; and in particular, sung the final invocation to Sabrina in a full and powerful tone of voice, which we have seldom heard surpassed.

These kind of allegorical compositions are necessarily unfit for actual representation. Every thing on the stage takes a literal, palpable shape, and is embodied to the sight. So much is done by the senses, that the imagination is not prepared to eke out any deficiency that may occur. We resign ourselves, as it were, to the illusion of the scene: we take it for granted, that whatever happens within that 'magic circle' is real; and whatever happens without it, is nothing. The eye of the mind cannot penetrate through the glare of lights which surround it, to the pure empyrean of thought and fancy; and the whole world of imagination fades into a dim and refined abstraction, compared with that part of it, which is brought out dressed, painted, moving, and breathing, a speaking pantomime before us. Whatever is seen or done, is sure to tell: what is heard only, unless it relates to what is seen or done, has little or no effect. All the fine writing in the world, therefore, which does not find its immediate interpretation in the objects or situations before us, is at best but elegant impertinence. We will just take two passages out of Comus, to shew how little the beauty of the poetry adds to the interest on the stage: the first is from the speech of the Spirit as Thyrsis:—

> 'This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
> Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb

Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till Fancy had her fill; but ere a close,
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance:
At which I ceased, and listen'd them a while,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy-flighted steeds
That draw the litter of close-curtain'd sleep:
At last a soft and solemn breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distill'd perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was 'ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more
Still to be so displaced.'

This passage was recited by Mr. Duruset; and the other, which we proposed to quote, equally became the mouth of Mr. Conway:—

'Two such I saw, what time the labour'd ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swinkt hedger at his supper sat;
I saw them under a green mantling vine
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots:
Their port was more than human as they stood:
I took it for a fairy vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live
And play in th' plighted clouds. I was awe-struck,
And as I pass'd, I worshipp'd.'

To those of our readers who may not be acquainted with Comus, these exquisite passages will be quite new, though they may have lately heard them on the stage.

There was an evident want of adaptation to theatrical representation in the last scene, where Comus persists in offering the Lady the cup, which she as obstinately rejects, without any *visible* reason. In the poetical allegory, it is the poisoned cup of pleasure: on the stage, it is a goblet filled with wine, which it seems strange she should refuse, as the person who presents it to her, has certainly no appearance of any dealings with the devil.

Milton's Comus is not equal to Lycidas, nor to Samson Agonistes.

It wants interest and passion, which both the others have. Lycidas is a fine effusion of classical sentiment in a youthful scholar: his Samson Agonistes is almost a canonisation of all the high moral and religious prejudices of his maturer years. *We* have no less respect for the memory of Milton as a patriot than as a poet. Whether he was a *true* patriot, we shall not enquire: he was at least a *consistent* one. He did not retract his defence of the people of England; he did not say that his sonnets to Vane or Cromwell were meant ironically; he was not appointed Poet-Laureat to a Court which he had reviled and insulted; he accepted neither place nor pension; nor did he write paltry sonnets upon the 'Royal fortitude' of the House of Stuart, by which, however, they really lost something.[1]

MR. KEAN'S LEON

The Examiner. *July* 2, 1815.

We went to see Mr. Kean in Leon, at Drury-Lane, and, on the whole, liked him less in it than we formerly liked Mr. Kemble in the same part. This preference, however, relates chiefly to personal considerations. In the first scenes of the play, Mr. Kemble's face and figure had a nobleness in them, which formed a contrast to the assumed character of the idiot, and thus carried off the disgusting effect of the part. Mr. Kean both acted and looked it too well. At the same time, we must do justice to the admirable comic talents displayed by Mr. Kean on this occasion. We never saw or heard looks or tones more appropriate and ludicrous. The house was in a roar. His alarm on being first introduced to his mistress, his pro fession of being 'very loving,' his shame after first saluting the lady, and his chuckling half-triumph on the repetition of the ceremony, were complete acting. Above all, we admired the careless self-complacent idiotcy with which he marched in, carrying his wife's fan, and holding up her hand. It was the triumph of folly. Even Mr. Liston, with all his inimitable graces in that way, could not have bettered it. In the serious part of the character he appeared to us less perfect. There was not repose enough, not enough of dignity. Leon, we apprehend, ought to be the man of spirit, but still more the gentleman. He has to stand in general upon the

[1] In the last edition of the works of a modern Poet, there is a Sonnet to the King, complimenting him on 'his royal fortitude.' The story of the Female Vagrant, which very beautifully and affectingly describes the miseries brought on the lower classes by war, in bearing which the said 'royal fortitude' is so nobly exercised, is very properly struck out of the collection.

defensive, upon his own rights, upon his own ground, and need not bluster, or look fierce. We will mention one instance in particular. Where he tells the Duke to leave the house, which we think he should do with perfect coolness and confidence, he pointed with his finger to the door, 'There, there,' with the same significant inveteracy of manner, as where, in Iago, he points to the dead body of Othello. The other parts of the play were well supported. Mrs. Glover deserves great praise for her Estifania. Mr. Bartley shewed both judgment and humour in the Copper Captain; and yet we were not satisfied with his performance. There is a thinness in his voice, and a plumpness in his person, neither of which is to our taste. His laughing when he finds that Cacafogo had been cheated by Estifania, was perfectly well done; but there was an effeminacy in his voice which took away from the hearty effect which Bannister used to give to this scene. Knight, in the old woman, was excellent. His reiteration of 'What?' in answer to the Copper Captain's questions, had the startling effect produced by letting off a pistol close at one's ears. It evidently proceeded from a person blest with 'double deafness' of body and mind. The morality of this excellent comedy is very indifferent; and having been prompted by the observations of some persons of fashion near us, we got into a train of agreeable reflections on the progressive refinement of this our age and country, which it was our intention to have communicated to our readers,—but that we dropt them in the lobbies!

THE TEMPEST

The Examiner. *July* 23, 1815.

As we returned some evenings ago from seeing the Tempest at Covent-Garden, we almost came to the resolution of never going to another representation of a play of Shakespear's as long as we lived; and we certainly did come to this determination, that we never would go *by choice.* To call it a representation, is indeed an abuse of language: it is travestie, caricature, any thing you please, but a representation. Even those daubs of pictures, formerly exhibited under the title of the Shakespear Gallery, had a less evident tendency to disturb and distort all the previous notions we had imbibed from reading Shakespear. In the first place, it was thought fit and necessary, in order to gratify the sound sense, the steady, sober judgment, and natural unsophisticated feelings of Englishmen a hundred years ago, to modernize the original play, and to disfigure its simple and beautiful structure, by loading it with the common-place, clap-trap sentiments,

artificial contrasts of situations and character, and all the heavy tinsel and affected formality which Dryden had borrowed from the French school. And be it observed, further, that these same anomalous, unmeaning, vulgar, and ridiculous additions, are all that *take* in the present farcical representation of the Tempest. The beautiful, the exquisitely beautiful descriptions in Shakespear, the still more refined, and more affecting sentiments, are not only not applauded as they ought to be (what fine murmur of applause should do them justice?)—they are not understood, nor are they even heard. The lips of the actors are seen to move, but the sounds they utter exciting no corresponding emotions in the breast, are no more distinguished than the repetition of so many cabalistical words. The ears of the audience are not prepared to drink in the music of the poet; or grant that they were, the bitterness of disappointment would only succeed to the stupor of indifference.

Shakespear has given to Prospero, Ariel, and the other characters in this play, language such as wizards and spirits, 'the gay creatures of the element,' might want to express their thoughts and purposes, and this language is here put into the mouth of Messrs. Young, Abbott, and Emery, and of Misses Matthews, Bristow, and Booth. ''Tis much.' Mr. Young is in general what is called a respectable actor. Now, as this is a phrase which does not seem to be very clearly understood by those who most frequently use it, we shall take this opportunity to define it. A respectable actor then, is one who seldom gratifies, and who seldom offends us; who never disappoints us, because we do not expect any thing from him, and who takes care never to rouse our dormant admiration by any unlooked-for strokes of excellence. In short, an actor of this class (not to speak it profanely) is a mere machine, who walks and speaks his part; who, having a tolerable voice, face, and figure, reposes entirely and with a prepossessing self-complacency on these natural advantages: who never risks a failure, because he never makes an effort; who keeps on the safe side of custom and decorum, without attempting improper liberties with his art; and who has not genius or spirit enough to do either well or ill. A respectable actor is on the stage, much what a pretty woman is in private life, who trusts to her outward attractions, and does not commit her taste or understanding, by hazardous attempts to shine in conversation. So we have generals, who leave every thing to be done by their men; patriots, whose reputation depends on their estates; and authors, who live on the stock of ideas they have in common with their readers.

Such is the best account we can give of the class of actors to which Mr. Young belongs, and of which he forms a principal ornament. As

long as he contents himself to play indifferent characters, we shall say nothing: but whenever he plays Shakespear, we must be excused if we take unequal revenge for the martyrdom which our feelings suffer. His Prospero was good for nothing; and consequently, was indescribably bad. It was grave without solemnity, stately without dignity, pompous without being impressive, and totally destitute of the wild, mysterious, preternatural character of the original. Prospero, as depicted by Mr. Young, did not appear the potent wizard brooding in gloomy abstraction over the secrets of his art, and around whom spirits and airy shapes throng numberless 'at his bidding;' but seemed himself an automaton, stupidly prompted by others: his lips moved up and down as if pulled by wires, not governed by the deep and varied impulses of passion; and his painted face, and snowy hair and beard, reminded us of the masks for the representation of Pantaloon. In a word, Mr. Young did not personate Prospero, but a pedagogue teaching his scholars how to recite the part, and not teaching them well.

Of one of the actors who assisted at this sacrifice of poetical genius, Emery, we think as highly as any one can do: he is indeed, in his way, the most perfect actor on the stage. His representations of common rustic life have an absolute identity with the thing represented. But the power of his mind is evidently that of imitation, not that of creation. He has nothing romantic, grotesque, or imaginary about him. Every thing in his hands takes a local and habitual shape. Now, Caliban is a mere creation; one of the wildest and most abstracted of all Shakespear's characters, whose deformity is only redeemed by the power and truth of the imagination displayed in it. It is the essence of grossness, but there is not the smallest vulgarity in it. Shakespear has described the brutal mind of this man-monster in contact with the pure and original forms of nature; the character grows out of the soil where it is rooted uncontrouled, uncouth, and wild, uncramped by any of the meannesses of custom. It is quite remote from any thing provincial; from the manners or dialect of any county in England. Mr. Emery had nothing of Caliban but his gaberdine, which did not become him. (We liked Mr. Grimaldi's Orson much better, which we saw afterwards in the pantomime.) Shakespear has, by a process of imagination usual with him, drawn off from Caliban the elements of every thing etherial and refined, to compound them into the unearthly mould of Ariel. Nothing was ever more finely conceived than this contrast between the material and the spiritual, the gross and delicate. Miss Matthews played and sung Ariel. She is to be sure a very 'tricksy spirit:' and all that we can say in her praise is, that she is

a better representative of the sylph-like form of the character, than the light and portable Mrs. Bland, who used formerly to play it She certainly does not sing the songs so well. We do not however wish to hear them sung, though never so well; no music can add any thing to their magical effect.—The words of Shakespear would be sweet, even 'after the songs of Apollo!'

MY WIFE! WHAT WIFE?

The Examiner. *July* 30, 1815.

The Haymarket is the most sociable of all our theatres. A wonderful concentration of interest, and an agreeable equality of pretension reign here. There is an air of unusual familiarity between the audience and the actors; the pit shakes hands with the boxes, and the galleries descend, from the invisible height to which they are raised at the other theatres, half-way into the orchestra. Now we have certain remains of a sneaking predilection for this mode of accommodating differences between all parts of the house; this average dissemination of comfort, and immediate circulation of enjoyment; and we take our places (just as it happens), on the same good terms with ourselves and our neighbours, as we should in sitting down to an ordinary at an inn. Every thing, however, has its drawbacks; and the Little Theatre in the Haymarket is not without them. If, for example, a party of elderly gentlewomen should come into a box close at your elbow, and immediately begin to talk loud, with an evident disregard of those around them, your only chance is either to quit the house altogether, or (if you really wish to hear the play), to remove to the very opposite side of it; for the ill-breeding of persons of that class, sex, and time of life, is incorrigible. At the great Theatres, it is sometimes very difficult to hear, for the noise and quarrelling in the gallery; here the only interruption to the performance is from the overflowing garrulity and friendly tittle-tattle of the boxes. The gods (as they are called), at Drury-lane and Covent-garden, we suspect, 'keep such a dreadful pudder o'er our heads,' from their impatience at not being able to hear what is passing below; and, at the minor theatres, are the most quiet and attentive of the audience.

It is the immemorial practice of the Haymarket Theatre to bring out, every season, a number of new pieces, good, bad, or indifferent. To this principle we are indebted for an odd play, with an odd title, 'My Wife! What Wife?' and whether it belongs to the class of

good, bad, or indifferent, we could not make up our minds at the time, and it has nearly escaped our memory since. Whether from its excellences or its absurdities, it is altogether very amusing. The best part of it is a very unaccountable, easy, impudent, blundering Irish footman, admirably represented by Mr. Tokely, whom we here take the liberty of introducing to the notice of our readers. 'Good Mr. Tokely, we desire better acquaintance with you.' We do not know whether this gentleman is himself an Irishman, but he has a wonderful sympathy with the manners and peculiarities of the character he had to represent. The ease, the ignorance, the impudence, the simplicity, the cunning, the lying, the good-nature, the absurdity, and the wit of the common character of the Irish, were depicted with equal fidelity and *naiveté* by this very lively actor; and his *brogue* was throughout a complete accompaniment to the sense. It floated up and down, and twisted round, and rose and fell, and started off or rattled on, just as the gusts of passion led.

The Irish and the Scotch brogue are very characteristic. In the one, the words are tumbled out altogether: in the other, every syllable is held fast between the teeth and kept in a sort of undulating suspense, lest circumstances should require a retractation before the end of the sentence. The Irish character is impetuous: the Scotch circumspect. The one is extreme unconsciousness, the other extreme consciousness. The one depends almost entirely on animal spirits, the other on will; the one on the feeling of the moment, the other on the calculation of consequences. The Irish character is therefore much more adapted for the stage: it presents more heterogeneous materials, and it is only unconscious absurdity that excites laughter. We seldom see a Scotchman introduced into an English farce: whereas an Irishman is always ready to be served up, and it is a standing dish at this kind of entertainment. Mr. Tokely sung two songs in the afterpiece with great effect. The laughing song was a thing of pure execution, made out of nothing but the feeling of humour in the actor.

Mr. Terry played the principal serious character in 'My Wife! What Wife?' He is a very careful and judicious actor: but his execution overlays the character. He is a walking grievance on the stage; a robust personification of the *comedie larmoyante*; a rock dropping tears of crystal; an iron figure, 'in the likeness of a sigh.' Mr. Jones was intended as a lively set-off to Mr. Terry. It was but a diversity of wretchedness. Mr. Jones is no favourite of ours. He is always the same Mr. Jones, who shews his teeth, and rolls his eyes,—

> 'And looks like a jackdaw just caught in a snare.'

Mr. Meggett has played Octavian twice at this theatre. He is a very decent, disagreeable actor, of the second or third-rate, who takes a great deal of pains to do ill. He did not, however, deserve to be hissed, and he only deserves to be applauded, because he was hissed undeservedly. He is a Scotch edition of Conway, without his beauty, and without his talent for noisy declamation.

Our play-houses are just now crowded with French people, with or without white cockades. A very intelligent French man and woman sat behind us the other evening at the representation of the Mountaineers, (one of the best of our modern plays) who were exceedingly shocked at the constant transitions from tragic to comic in this piece. It is strange that a people who have no keeping in themselves, should be offended at our want of keeping in theatrical representations. But it is an old remark, that the manners of every nation and their dramatic taste are opposite to each other. In the present instance, there can be no question, but that the distinguishing character of the English is gravity, and of the French levity. How then is it that this is reversed on the stage? Because the English wish to relieve the continuity of their feelings by something light and even farcical, and the French cannot afford to offer the same temptation to their natural levity. They become grave only by system, and the formality of their artificial style is resorted to as a preservative against the infection of their national disposition. One quaint line in a thousand sad ones, operating on their mercurial and volatile spirits, would turn the whole to farce. The English are sufficiently tenacious of strong passion to retain it in spite of other feelings: the French are only tragic by the force of dulness, and every thing serious would fly at the appearance of a jest.

MR. HARLEY'S FIDGET

The Examiner. *August* 6, 1815.

Mr. Harley is an addition to the comic strength of the Lyceum. We have not seen him in the part of Leatherhead, in The Blue Stocking, in which he has been much spoken of; but as an intriguing knave of a servant, he was the life of a very dull and incredible farce, which came out the other night under the title of My Aunt; and we afterwards liked him still better as Fidget, in The Boarding House, where he had more scope for his abilities. He gave the part with all the liveliness, insinuating complaisance, and volubility of speech and motion, which belong to it. He has a great deal of vivacity, archness, and that quaint extravagance,

which constitutes the most agreeable kind of buffoonery We think it likely he will become a considerable favourite with the public; and the more so, because he is not only a very amusing actor, but also possesses those recommendations of face, person, and manner, which go a great way in conciliating public favour. These are the more necessary in those burlesque characters, which have little foundation in real life, and which, as they serve chiefly to furnish opportunities for the drollery of the actor to display itself, bring him constantly before us in his personal capacity.

We are really glad to be pleased whenever we can, and we were pleased with Peter Fidget. His dress and his address are equally comic and in character. He wears a white morning jean coat, and a white wig, the curls of which hang down like lappets over his shoulders, and form a good contrast with the plump, rosy, shining face beneath it. He comes bolt upon the stage, and jumps into the good graces of the audience before they have time to defend themselves. Peter Fidget, 'master of a boarding-house, with a green door—brass knocker—No. 1, round the corner—facing the Steyne—Brighton'—is a very impudent, rattling fellow, with a world of business and cares on his back, which however it seems broad enough to bear, the lightness of whose head gets the better of the heaviness of his heels, and whose person thrives in proportion to his custom. It is altogether a very laughable exaggeration, and lost none of its effect in the hands of Mr. Harley.

In the new farce of My Aunt, Mr. Wallack played the character of a fashionable rake, and he is said to have played it well. If this is a good specimen of the class, we can only say we do not wish to extend our acquaintance with it; for we never saw any thing more disagreeable. Miss Poole played the Niece to Mrs. Harlowe's Aunt; and seemed a very proper niece for such an aunt. Mr. Pyne 'warbled his love-lorn ditties all night long;'—for a despairing lover, we never saw any one look better, or flushed with a more purple grace—'as one incapable of his own distress.' He appears to have taken a hint from Sir John Suckling;—

'Prythee, why so pale, fond lover,
Prythee why so pale?
Will, if looking well won't win her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prythee, why so pale?'

We went to the Haymarket Theatre on Thursday, to see Mr. Meggett in the Iron Chest, with that laudable desire which we

always feel to find out any error in our former opinions; but in this desire, as it generally happens, we were disappointed. We however consider Mr. Meggett's Sir Edward Mortimer as a much more successful delineation than his Octavian. The character is taken from Falkland, in Mr. Godwin's Caleb Williams, which is unquestionably the best modern novel. The character, as it is treated by Colman, is one of much less genius and elevation than the original. It is harsh, heavy, fierce, and painfully irritable, but at the same time forcible and affecting. Such, at least, was the impression we received from Mr. Meggett's representation of it. What this actor wants is genial expression, and a certain general impulse which is inseparable from all passion. The tide of feeling in him frets itself away in narrow nooks and estuaries. His habitual manner is too hard and dry—he makes too dead a set at every thing. He grinds his words out between his teeth as if he had a lockjaw, and his action is clenched till it resembles the commencement of a fit of the epilepsy. He strains his muscles till he seems to have lost the use of them. If Mr. Kemble was hard, Mr. Meggett is rigid, to a petrifying degree. We however think that he gave considerable force and feeling to the part, by the justness of his conception, and by the energy of his execution. But neither energy nor good sense is sufficient to make the great actor:—it requires genius, which nothing can give. Study may teach us to distinguish the forms and classes of things; but it is genius alone which puts us in possession of the powers of art or nature. This play, when it first came out, excited a great deal of idle controversy and vulgar abuse. It appears to us to be a play of great interest; but that interest depends upon the sentiment, and not on the story or situations, and consequently is very little understood by a mixed audience.

Miss Greville made an interesting representative of Helen, the mistress of Sir Edward Mortimer. Mr. Barnard had considerable merit in Wilford, the Caleb Williams of the piece; though he seemed somewhat too insignificant an instrument to produce such terrible effects. Mr. Tokely played the ruffian (Orson) admirably well. Mrs. Belfield, his Dulcinea in the gang of robbers, perfectly frightened us in the cave-scene. We felt as much disconcerted by the uncalled-for phrensy of this theatrical amazon, as the Squire of Dames in Spenser did, when he was carried off by the giantess, Ogygia; or, as Mr. Capel Lofft must have done the other day, when Mrs. Mary Ann Bulmer pounced upon him in the Chronicle.

Mr. Foote was the brother of Sir Edward Mortimer. This gentleman is of the Wroughton school; that is, he belongs to the

old English class of honest country gentlemen, who abound more in good nature than good sense, and who have a most plentiful lack of gall and wit. Mr. Foote does not discredit this branch of the profession. These persons are always very comfortable in themselves, and busy about other people. This is exceedingly provoking. They speak with good emphasis and discretion, and are in general of a reasonable corpulence. Whenever we see an actor of this class, with a hat and feather, a gold belt, and more than ordinary merit, we are strangely reminded of our old friend Mr. Gyngell, the celebrated itinerant manager, and the only showman in England, who, after the festivity of the week, makes a point of staying the Sunday over, and goes with all his family to church.

LIVING IN LONDON

The Examiner. *August* 13, 1815.

A new Comedy, called Living in London, by the author (as it appears) of Love and Gout, has been brought forward at the Haymarket Theatre. It is in three acts. The first act promised exceedingly well. The scenes were well-contrived, and the dialogue was neat and pointed. But in the second and third, the comic invention of the writer seemed to be completely exhausted; his plot became entangled and ridiculous, and he strove to relieve the wearied attention of the audience, by some of the most desperate attempts at *double entendre* we ever remember. Thus a servant is made to say, that 'no one can *bring up* his master's dinner but himself.' We are told by very good authority, that 'want of decency is want of sense.' The plot is double, and equally ill-supported in both its branches. A lady of fashion (who was made as little disgusting as the part would permit by Miss Greville) makes overtures of love to a nobleman, (Lord Clamourcourt, Mr. Foote), by publishing an account of a supposed intrigue between herself and him in the newspapers. The device is new, at least. The same nobleman is himself made jealous of his wife by the assumption of her brother's name (Neville) by a coxcomb of his acquaintance, by the circumstance of a letter directed to the real Neville having been received by the pretended one, and by the blunders which follow from it. The whole developement of the plot is carried on by letters, and there is hardly a scene towards the conclusion, in which a footman does not come in, as the bearer of some alarming piece of intelligence. Lord Clamourcourt, just as he is sitting down to dinner with his wife, receives a letter from his mistress; he hurries away, and his Lady

having no appetite left, orders the dinner back. Lord Clamourcourt is no sooner arrived at the place of assignation than he receives an anonymous letter, informing him that Neville is at his house, and he flies back on the wings of jealousy, as he had come on those of love. All this is very artificial and improbable. *Quod sic mihi ostendis incredulus odi.*

We were a good deal disappointed in this play, as from the commencement we had augured very favourably of it. There was not much attempt to draw out the particular abilities of the actors; and the little that there was, did not succeed. Matthews, who is in general exceedingly amusing, did not appear at all to advantage. The author did not seem to understand what use to make of him. He was an automaton put into his hands, of which he did not know how to turn the pegs. He is shoved on, and then shoved off the stage to no purpose, as if his exit or his entrance made the jest. One person twirls him round by the flap of his coat, and another jerks him back again by the tail of his perriwig. He is first a stupid servant, and is next metamorphosed, without taking his degrees, into an ignorant doctor. He changes his dress, but the same person remains. He has nothing to do but to run about like a dog to fetch and carry, or to fidget over the stage like the dolls that dance (to please the children) to the barrel-organs in the street. For our own parts, we had rather see Punch and the puppet-shew.

THE KING'S PROXY

The Examiner. *Aug.* 27, 1815.

A new Opera was brought out at the Lyceum, last week, called The King's Proxy; or Judge for yourself. If we were to judge for ourselves, we should conceive that Mr. Arnold must have dreamt this opera. It might be called the Manager's Opera. It is just what might be supposed to occur to him, nodding and half asleep in his arm-chair after dinner, having fatigued himself all the morning with ransacking the refuse of the theatre for the last ten years. In this dozing state, it seems that from the wretched fragments strewed on the floor, the essence of four hundred rejected pieces flew up and took possession of his brain, with all that is thread-bare in plot, lifeless in wit, and sickly in sentiment. Plato, in one of his immortal dialogues, supposes a man to be shut up in a cave with his back to the light, so that he sees nothing but the shadows of men passing and repassing on the wall of his prison. The Manager of the Lyceum Theatre appears to be much in the same situation. He does not get

a single glimpse of life or nature, but as he has seen it represented on his own boards, or conned it over in his manuscripts. The apparitions of gilded sceptres, painted groves and castles, wandering damsels, cruel fathers and tender lovers, float in incessant confusion before him. His characters are the shadows of a shade; but he keeps a very exact inventory of his scenery and dresses, and can always command the orchestra.

Mr. Arnold may be safely placed at the head of a very prevailing class of poets. He writes with the fewest ideas possible; his meaning is more nicely balanced between sense and nonsense, than that of any of his competitors; he succeeds from the perfect insignificance of his pretensions, and fails to offend through downright imbecility. The story of the present piece, (built on the well-known tradition of the Saxon King who was deceived by one of his courtiers in the choice of his wife), afforded ample scope for striking situation and effect; but Mr. Arnold has perfectly neutralised all interest in it. In this he was successfully seconded by those able associates, Mr. and Mrs. T. Cooke, Mr. Pyne, Mr. Wallack, by the sturdy pathos of Fawcett, and Miss Poole's elegant dishabille. One proof of talent the author has shewn, we allow—and that is, he has contrived to make Miss Kelly disagreeable in the part of Editha. The only good thing in the play was a dance by Miss Luppino and Miss C. Bristow.

THE MAID AND THE MAGPIE

The Examiner. *Sept.* 3, 1815.

A piece has been brought out at the Lyceum, called the Maid and the Magpie, translated from the French, and said to be founded on a true story of a girl having been condemned for a theft, which was discovered after her death to have been committed by a magpie. The catastrophe is here altered. The play itself is a very delightful little piece. It unites a great deal of lightness and gaiety with an equal degree of interest. The dialogue is kept up with spirit, and the story never flags. The incidents, though numerous and complicated with a number of minute circumstances, are very clearly and artfully connected together. The spirit of the French stage is manifest through the whole performance, as well as its superiority to the general run of our present dramatic productions. The superiority of our old comedy to the French (if we make the single exception of Moliere) is to be traced to the greater variety and originality of our national characters. The French, however, have the advantage of us in playing with the

common-place surface of comedy, in the harlequinade of surprises and escapes, in the easy gaiety of the dialogue, and in the delineation of character, neither insipid nor overcharged.

The whole piece was excellently cast. Miss Kelly was the life of it. Oxberry made a very good Jew. Mrs. Harlowe was an excellent representative of the busy, bustling, scolding housewife; and Mr. Gattie played the Justice of the Peace with good emphasis and discretion. The humour of this last actor, if not exceedingly powerful, is always natural and easy. Knight did not make so much of his part as he usually does.

THE HYPOCRITE

The Examiner. *Drury-Lane, Sept.* 17, 1815.

The Tartuffe, the original of the Hypocrite, is a play that we do not very well understand. Still less do we understand the Hypocrite, which is taken from it. In the former, the glaring improbability of the plot, the absurdity of a man's imposing on the credulity of another in spite of the evidence of his senses, and without any proof of the sincerity of a religious charlatan but his own professions, is carried off by long formal speeches and dull pompous casuistry. We find our patience tired out, and our understanding perplexed, as if we were sitting by in a court of law. If there is nothing of nature, at least there is enough of art, in the French play. But in the Hypocrite (we mean the principal character itself), there is neither the one nor the other. Tartuffe is a plausible, fair-spoken, long-winded knave, who if he does not convince, confounds his auditors.

In the Hypocrite of Bickerstaff, the insidious, fawning, sophistical, accomplished French Abbé is modernised into a low-lived, canting, impudent Methodist preacher; and this was the character which Mr. Dowton represented, we must say, too well. Dr. Cantwell is a sturdy beggar, and nothing more: he is not an impostor, but a bully. There is not in any thing that he says or does, in his looks, words or actions, the least reason that Sir John Lambert should admit him into his house and friendship, suffer him to make love to his wife and daughter, disinherit his son in his favour, and refuse to listen to any insinuation or proof offered against the virtue and piety of his treacherous inmate. In the manners and institutions of the old French *regime*, there was something to account for the blind ascendancy acquired by the good priest over his benefactor, who might have submitted to be cuckolded, robbed, cheated, and insulted, as a tacit proof of his religion and loyalty. The inquisitorial power exercised by the

Church was then so great, that a man who refused to be priest-ridden, might very soon be suspected of designs against the state. This is at least the best account we can give of the tameness of Orgon. But in this country, nothing of the kind could happen. A fellow like Dr. Cantwell could only have got admittance into the kitchen of Sir John Lambert—or to the ear of old Lady Lambert. The animal magnetism of such spiritual guides, is with us directed against the weaker nerves of our female devotees.

We discovered nothing in Mr. Dowton's manner of giving the part to redeem its original improbability, or gloss over its obvious deformity. His locks are combed down smooth over his shoulders; but he does not sufficiently 'sleek o'er his rugged looks.' His tones, except where he assumes the whining twang of the conventicle, are harsh and abrupt. He sometimes exposes his true character prematurely and unnecessarily, as where he is sent to Charlotte with a message from her father. He is a very vulgar, coarse, *substantial* hypocrite. His hypocrisy appears to us of that kind which arises from ignorance and grossness, without any thing of refinement or ability, which yet the character requires. The cringing, subtle, accomplished master-villain, the man of talent and of the world, was wanting. It is, in a word, just that sort of hypocrisy which might supply a lazy adventurer in the place of work, which he might live and get fat upon, but which would not enable him to conduct plots and conspiracies in high life. We do not say that the fault is in Mr. Dowton. The author has attempted to amalgamate two contradictory characters, by engrafting our vulgar Methodist on the courtly French impostor; and the error could not perhaps be remedied in the performance. The only scene which struck us as in Mr. Dowton's best manner, as truly masterly, was that in which he listens with such profound indifference and unmoved gravity to the harangue of Mawworm. Mr. Dowton's general excellence is in hearty ebullitions of generous and natural feeling, or in a certain swelling pride and vain glorious exaggerated ostentation, as in Major Sturgeon, and not in constrained and artificial characters.

Mawworm, which is a purely local and national caricature, was admirably personated by Oxberry. Mrs. Sparks's old Lady Lambert, is, we think, one of the finest exhibitions of character on the stage. The attention which she pays to Dr. Cantwell, her expression of face and her fixed uplifted hands, were a picture which Hogarth might have copied. The effects of the *spirit* in reviving the withered ardour of youth, and giving a second birth to forgotten raptures, were never better exemplified. Mrs. Orger played young Lady Lambert as well as the equivocal nature of the part would

admit; and Miss Kelly was as lively and interesting as usual in Charlotte. Of Mr. Wallack we cannot speak so favourably as some of our contemporaries. This gentleman 'has honours thrust upon him' which he does not deserve, and which, we should think, he does not wish. He has been declared, by the first authority, to stand at the head of his profession in the line of genteel comedy. It is usual, indeed, to congratulate us on the accession of Mr. Wallack at the expence of Mr. Decamp, but it is escaping from Scylla to Charybdis. We are glad to have parted with Mr. Decamp, and should not be inconsolable for the loss of Mr. Wallack.

The best thing we remember in Mr. Coleridge's tragedy of Remorse, and which gave the greatest satisfaction to the audience, was that part in which Decamp was precipitated into a deep pit, from which, by the elaborate description which the poet had given of it, it was plainly impossible he should ever rise again. If Mr. Wallack is puffed off and stuck at the top of his profession at this unmerciful rate, it would almost induce us to wish Mr. Coleridge to write another tragedy, to dispose of him in the same way as his predecessor.

MR. EDWARDS'S RICHARD III

The Examiner. *Oct.* 1, 1815.

A Mr. Edwards, who has occasionally played at private theatricals, appeared at Covent-Garden Theatre in the character of Richard the Third. It was one of those painful failures, for which we are so often indebted to the managers. How these profound judges, who exercise 'sole sway and sovereignty' over this department of the public amusements, who have it in their power to admit or reject without appeal, whose whole lives have been occupied in this one subject, and whose interest (to say nothing of their reputation) must prompt them to use their very best judgment in deciding on the pretensions of the candidates for public favour, should yet be so completely ignorant of their profession, as to seem not to know the difference between the *best* and the *worst*, and frequently to bring forward in the most arduous characters, persons whom the meanest critic in the pit immediately perceives to be totally disqualified for the part they have undertaken—is a problem which there would be some difficulty in solving. It might suggest to us also, a passing suspicion that the same discreet arbiters of taste suppress real excellence in the same manner as they obtrude incapacity on the notice of the public, if genius were not a thing so much rarer than the want of it.

If Mr. Edwards had shewn an extreme ignorance of the author, but had possessed the peculiar theatrical requisites of person, voice, and manner, we should not have been surprised at the managers having been deceived by imposing appearances. But Mr. Edwards failed, less from a misapprehension of his part, than from an entire defect of power to execute it. If every word had been uttered with perfect propriety (which however was very far from being the case) his gestures and manner would have made it ridiculous. Of personal defects of this kind, a man cannot be a judge of himself; and his friends will not tell him. The managers of a play-house are the only persons who can screen any individual, possessed with an unfortunate theatrical *mania*, from exposing himself to public mortification and disgrace for the want of those professional qualifications of which they are supposed to be infallible judges.

At the same Theatre, a lady of the name of Hughes has been brought out in Mandane, in the favourite Opera of Artaxerxes—we should hope, not in the place of Miss Stephens. We do not say this for the sake of any invidious comparison, but for our own sakes, and for the sake of the public. Miss Hughes is, we believe, a very accomplished singer, with a fine and flexible voice, with considerable knowledge and execution. But where is the sweetness, the simplicity, the melting soul of music? There was a voluptuous delicacy, a *naiveté* in Miss Stephens's singing, which we have never heard before nor since, and of which we should be loth to be deprived. Her songs in Mandane lingered on the ear like an involuntary echo to the music—as if the sentiment were blended with and trembled on her voice. This was particularly the case in the two delightful airs, 'If o'er the cruel tyrant love,' and 'Let not rage thy bosom firing.' In the former of these, the notes faultered and fell from her lips like drops of dew from surcharged flowers. If it is impossible to be a judge of music without understanding it as a science, it is still more impossible to be so without understanding the sentiment it is intended to convey. Miss Hughes declaimed and acted these two songs, instead of singing them. She lisps, and smiles, and bows, and overdoes her part constantly. We do not think Mandane is at all the heroine she represents her—or, if she is, we do not wish to see her. This lady would do much better at the Opera.

Mr. Duruset sung 'Fair Semira' with taste and feeling. We wish, in hearing the song 'In infancy our hope and fears,' we could have forgotten Miss Rennell's simple, but sustained and impressive execution of it.—Mr. Taylor played Arbaces, instead of Mr. Incledon.

LOVERS' VOWS

The Examiner. *October* 8, 1815.

Lovers' Vows has been brought forward at Drury-Lane Theatre, and a young lady of the name of Mardyn has appeared in the character of Amelia Wildenheim. Much has been said in her praise, and with a great deal of justice. Her face is handsome, and her figure is good, bordering (but not too much), on *embonpoint*. There is, also, a full luscious sweetness in her voice, which was in harmony with the sentiments she had to express. The whole of this play, which is of German origin, carries the romantic in sentiment and story to the extreme verge of decency as well as probability. The character of Amelia Wildenheim is its principal charm. The open, undisguised simplicity of this character is, however, so enthusiastically extravagant, as to excite some little surprise and incredulity on an English stage. The portrait is too naked, but still it is the nakedness of innocence. She lets us see into the bottom of her heart, but there is nothing there which she need wish to disguise. Mrs. Mardyn did the part very delightfully —with great spirit, truth, and feeling. She, perhaps, gave it a greater maturity of consciousness than it is supposed to possess. Her action is, in general, graceful and easy, but her movements were, at times, too youthful and unrestrained, and too much like *waltzing*.

Mrs. Glover and Mr. Pope did ample justice to the principal *moral* characters in the drama; and we were perfectly satisfied with Mr. Wallack in Anhalt, the tutor and lover of Amelia. Some of the situations in this popular play (let the critics say what they will of their extravagance), are very affecting, and we will venture our opinion, that more tears were shed on this one occasion, than there would be at the representation of Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Macbeth, for a whole season. This is not the fault of Shakespeare, but neither is it the fault of Kotzebue.

Mr. Dowton came out for the first time in the character of Shylock, in the Merchant of Venice. Our own expectations were not raised very high on this occasion, and they were not disappointed. All the first part of the character, the habitual malignity of Shylock, his keen sarcasms and general invectives, were fully understood, and given with equal force and discrimination. His manner of turning the bond into a 'merry jest,' and his ironical indifference about it, were an improvement which Mr. Dowton had borrowed from the

comic art. But when the character is brought into action, that is, when the passions are let loose, and excited to the highest pitch of malignity, joy, or agony, he failed, not merely from the breaking down of his voice, but from the want of that movement and tide of passion, which overcomes every external disadvantage, and bears down every thing in its course. We think Mr. Dowton was wrong in several of his conceptions in the trial scene and other places, by attempting too many of those significant distinctions, which are only natural and proper when the mind remains in its ordinary state, and in entire possession of its faculties. Passion requires the broadest and fullest manner possible. In fine, Mr. Dowton gave only the prosaic side of the character of Shylock, without the poetical colouring which belongs to it and is the essence of tragic acting. Mr. Lovegrove was admirable in Launcelot Gobbo. The scene between him and Wewitzer, as Old Gobbo, was one of the richest we have seen for a long time. Pope was respectable as Antonio. Mr. Penley's Gratiano was more remarkable for an appearance of folly than of gaiety.

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

The Examiner. *Covent-Garden, October 15, 1815.*

Why can we not always be young, and seeing the School for Scandal? This play used to be one of our great theatrical treats in our early play-going days. What would we not give to see it once more, as it was then acted, and with the same feelings with which we saw it then? Not one of our old favourites is left, except little Simmons, who only served to put us in mind more strongly of what we have lost! Genteel comedy cannot be acted at present. Little Moses, the money-lender, was within a hair's-breadth of being the only person in the piece who had the appearance or manners of a gentleman. There was a *retenu* in the conduct of his cane and hat, a precision of dress and costume, an idiomatic peculiarity of tone, an exact propriety both in his gestures and sentiments, which reminded us of the good old times when every one belonged to a marked class in society, and maintained himself in his characteristic absurdities by a *cheveux-de-fris* of prejudices, forms, and ceremonies. Why do our patriots and politicians rave for ever about the restoration of the good old times? Till they can persuade the beaux in Bond-street to resume their swords and bag-wigs, they will never succeed.

When we go to see a Comedy of the past age acted on the modern stage, we too almost begin to 'cast some longing, lingering looks

behind,' at the departed sword-knots and toupees of the age of Louis XIV. We never saw a play more completely vulgarised in the acting than this. What shall we say of Fawcett, who played Sir Peter Teazle with such formidable breadth of shoulders and strength of lungs? Or to Mrs. Dobbs, who made such a pretty, insipid little rustic of Lady Teazle, shewing her teeth like the painted dolls in a peruke-maker's window? Or to Mrs. Gibbs, who converted the delicacy of Mrs. Candour into the coarseness of a bar-maid? Or to Mr. Blanchard, whose face looked so red, and his eyes so fierce in Old Crabtree, and who seemed to have mistaken one of his stable-boys for his nephew, Sir Benjamin? Or (not to speak it profanely) to Mr. Young's Joseph Surface? Never was there a less prepossessing hypocrite. Mr. Young, indeed, puts on a long, disagreeable, whining face, but he does not hide the accomplished, plausible villain beneath it. Jack Palmer was the man. No one ever came so near the idea of what the women call 'a fine man.' With what an air he trod the stage!—With what pomp he handed Lady Teazle to a chair! With what elaborate duplicity he knelt to Maria! Mr. Young ought never to condescend to play comedy, nor aspire to play tragedy. Sentimental pantomime is his forte. Charles Kemble made the best Charles Surface we have seen. He acted this difficult character (difficult because it requires a union of so many requisites, a good face and figure, easy manners, evident good nature, animation and sensibility) in such a way as to make it truly interesting and delightful. The only fault we can find with him is, that he was not well dressed.—Mrs. Faucit was respectable in Lady Sneerwell. Mr. Terry, as Sir Oliver Surface, wore a great coat with yellow buttons. Mr. Farley, in Trip, had a large bouquet: and why should we refuse to do justice to Mr. Claremont, who was dressed in black? The School for Scandal is one of the best Comedies in our language (a language abounding in good Comedies), and it deserves either to be well acted, or not acted at all. The wit is inferior to Congreve's, and the allusions much coarser. Its great excellence is in the invention of comic situations,[1] and the lucky contrast of different characters. The satirical conversation at Lady Sneerwell's, is an indifferent imitation of The Way of the World, and Sir Benjamin Backbite a foolish superfluity from the older comedy. He did not need the aid of Mr. Tokely to make him ridiculous. We have already spoken well of this actor's talents for low humour, but if he wishes to remain on the establishment, we are afraid he must keep in the kitchen.

[1] The scene where the screen falls and discovers Lady Teazle, is without a rival. Perhaps the discovery is delayed rather too long.

MRS. ALSOP'S ROSALIND

The Examiner. *October 22, 1815.*

A Lady of the name of Alsop, a daughter of Mrs. Jordan (by a former husband), has appeared at Covent-Garden Theatre, in the character of Rosalind. Not only the circumstance of her relationship to that excellent actress, but the accounts in the papers, raised our curiosity and expectations very high. We were unwillingly disappointed. The truth is, Mrs. Alsop is a very nice little woman, who acts her part very sensibly and cleverly, and with a certain degree of arch humour, but 'no more like her mother than we to Hercules.' When we say this, we mean no disparagement to this lady's talents, who is a real acquisition to the stage in correct and chaste acting, but simply to prevent comparisons, which can only end in disappointment. Mrs. Alsop would make a better Celia than Rosalind. Mrs. Jordan's excellences were all natural to her. It was not as an actress but as herself, that she charmed every one. Nature had formed her in her most prodigal humour: and when nature is in the humour to make a woman all that is delightful, she does it most effectually. Mrs. Jordan was the same in all her characters, and inimitable in all of them, because there was no one else like her. Her face, her tones, her manner were irresistible. Her smile had the effect of sunshine, and her laugh did one good to hear it. Her voice was eloquence itself: it seemed as if her heart was always at her mouth. She was all gaiety, openness, and good-nature. She rioted in her fine animal spirits, and gave more pleasure than any other actress, because she had the greatest spirit of enjoyment in herself. Her Nell—but we will not tantalize ourselves or our readers. Mrs. Alsop has nothing luxurious about her, and Mrs. Jordan was nothing else. Her voice is clear and articulate, but not rich or flowing. In person she is small, and her face is not prepossessing. Her delivery of the speeches was correct and excellent as far as it went, but without much richness or power. Lively good sense is what she really possesses. She also sung the Cuckoo Song very pleasingly.

Charles Kemble made an interesting Orlando. Mr. Young spoke the 'Seven Ages' with propriety, and some effect. Mr. Fawcett's Touchstone was decent; and Mrs. Gibbs in Audrey, the very thing itself.

Mrs. Mardyn appeared at Drury-Lane Theatre in the play of The Will. We like her better than ever. She has still an exuberance

in her manner and action, which might be spared. She almost *dances* the character. She is, or she looks, very handsome; is perfectly well made, and has a very powerful voice, of which she makes full use. With a little more elegance, a little more decorum, a little more restraint upon the display of her charms, she would be the most fascinating comic actress on the stage. We cannot express the only fault we have to find with her better than by saying, that we think her manner was perfectly in character in her boy's clothes. The scene with Deborah, where she was frightened by the supposed ghost, had wonderful effect. Mr. Wallack played the young tutor as if he had been chaplain to a bishop. Lovegrove's humour in the old steward was feeble: it would not reach the galleries.

JOHN DU BART

The Examiner. *October* 29, 1815.

John Du Bart is said to have made a great noise in his life-time; but it was nothing to the noise he makes at present at Covent-Garden Theatre, with his good ship Fame, and his gallant son Francis. We very much doubt, whether the vessel in which the great John forced his way out of Dunkirk harbour, was equal in size to the one in which Mr. Farley pipes all hands on board, and assaults the chandeliers and side-boxes of the Theatre-Royal. The ladies, like so many Andromedas, were thrown into evident consternation at the approach of this sea-monster. To what a degree of perfection the useful and elegant arts must have been carried in a country, where a real ship, as large as the life, can be brought on the stage, to the amazement and confusion of the audience! Speaking within compass, the man of war which is now got up at Covent-Garden, is full as large as any of the flotilla which last year ploughed the bosom of the Serpentine River, and the sea-fight with which the Managers have favoured us before Christmas, is as interesting as that which took place in Hyde Park, between the English and American squadrons, under the tasteful direction of the Prince Regent. We pronounce this the most nonsensical farce (with the exception perhaps of the one just alluded to) we were ever present at. The utmost that the poet or the mechanist could have aspired to, must have been to produce the effects of a first sea-voyage. There lay the ship of John Du Bart for half an hour, rocking about on crape waves, with the sun rising on one side, and night coming on in a thunder-storm on the other, guns firing, and the orchestra playing; Mr. Farley on board, bawling himself hoarse, looking like the

master of a Dutch squabber, or still more like the figure at the mast-head; Miss Booth as busy as she could make herself; Mr. Treby and Mr. Truman doing nothing; Mr. Hamerton with a hat and feathers, as the Crown Prince of Poland; Mr. Tokely very much at home drinking punch, and Mr. Liston (the only sensible man on board) wishing himself in any other situation. If any thing were wanting to complete the dizziness of brain produced by all this, it was supplied by the music of Mr. Bishop, who kept firing a perpetual broadside on the ears of the audience. From the overture to the finale, we heard nothing but

'Guns, drums, trumpets, blunderbuss, and thunder!'

Never since the invention of French Operas was there such an explosion of dissonant sounds. If this is music, then the clashing of bells, the letting off of rockets and detonating balls, or the firing a pistol close at your ear on an illumination night, is music. John Du Bart is taken from the French; and from the plot and sentiments, it is not difficult to guess the date of the French piece. It turns upon the preference due to an elected over an hereditary prince; and the chief actors are made to utter such sentiments as this, that 'treason consists in supporting a monarch on the throne in opposition to the voice of the people.' We wonder it is suffered to be acted —since *the hundred days* are over!

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA

The Examiner. *November* 6, 1815.

We are glad to announce another interesting Polly at Drury-Lane Theatre, in the person of Miss Nash, from the Theatre-Royal, Bath. We are glad of every thing that facilitates the frequent representation of that inimitable play, the Beggar's Opera, which unites those two good things, sense and sound, in a higher degree than any other performance on the English or (or as far as we know) on any other stage. It is to us the best proof of the good sense as well as real delicacy of the British public, to see the most beautiful women in the boxes and the most veteran critics in the pit, whenever it is acted. All sense of humanity must be lost before the Beggar's Opera can cease to fill the mind with delight and admiration.

Miss Nash is tall, elegantly formed, in the bloom of youth, and with a very pretty face. Her voice has great sweetness, flexibility, and depth. Her execution is scientific, but gracefully simple; and

she sang the several songs with equal taste and feeling. Her action, though sufficiently chaste and correct, wanted ease and spirit, so that the general impression left on the spectator's imagination was that of a very beautiful alabaster figure which had been taught to sing. She was greeted in the most encouraging manner on her first appearance, and rapturously applauded throughout. Indeed the songs and the music are so exquisite in themselves, that if given with their genuine characteristic simplicity, they cannot fail to delight the most insensible ear. The songs to which she gave most sweetness and animation were those beginning, 'But he so teazed me'—'Why how now, saucy Jade'—and 'Cease your funning.' Her mode of executing the last was not certainly so delightful as the way in which Miss Stephens sings it, but it was still infinitely delightful. Her low notes are particularly fine. They have a deep, mellow richness, which we have never heard before in a female voice. The sound is like the murmuring of bees.

Miss Kelly played Lucy, and we need hardly add, that she played it well. She is a charming little vixen: has the most agreeable pout in the world, and the best-humoured smile; shews all the insolence of lively satisfaction, and when she is in her airs, the blood seems to tingle at her fingers' ends. Her expression of triumph when Macheath goes up to her rival, singing 'Tol de rol lol,' and her vexation and astonishment when he turns round upon her in the same manner, were admirable. Her acting in this scene was encored; that is to say, Mr. Cooke's song was encored for the sake of the acting. She is the best Lucy we have seen, except Mrs. Charles Kemble, who, though she did not play the part more naturally, did it with a higher spirit and greater *gusto*.

Of Mr. T. Cooke's Macheath, we cannot say any thing favourable. Indeed, we do not know any actor on the stage who is enough of the fine gentleman to play it. Perhaps the elder Kemble might, but then he is no singer! It would be an experiment for Mr. Kean: but we don't think he could do it. This is a paradox; but we will explain. As close a resemblance, then, as the dress of the ladies in the private boxes bears to that of that of the ladies in the boxes which are not private, so nearly should the manners of Gay's Macheath resemble those of the fine gentleman. Mr. Harley's Filch is not good. Filch is a serious, contemplative, conscientious character. This Simmons perfectly understands, as he does every character that he plays. He sings the song, ''Tis woman that seduces all mankind,' as if he had a pretty girl in one eye, and the gallows in the other. Mr. Harley makes a joke of it. Mrs. Sparkes's Mrs. Peachum we hardly think so good as Mrs. Davenport's.

Munden spoils Peachum, by lowering the character into broad farce. He does not utter a single word without a nasal twang, and a distortion of his face and body. Peachum is an old rogue, but not a buffoon. Mr. Dowton's Lockitt was good, but it is difficult to play this part after Emery, who in the hard, dry, and impenetrable, has no rival. The scene where Dowton and Munden quarrel, and exchange wigs in the scuffle, was the best. They were admirably dressed. A hearty old gentleman in the pit, one of the old school, enthusiastically called out, 'Hogarth, by G—d!' The ladies in the scene at the tavern with Macheath were genteeler than usual. This we were pleased to see; for a great deal depends on the casting of that scene. How Gay must have chuckled, when he found it once fairly over, and the house in a roar! They leave it out at Covent-Garden, from the systematic attention which is paid there to the morals of the town!

MISS O'NEILL'S ELWINA

The Examiner. *November* 19, 1815.

During the last week Miss O'Neill has condescended to play the character of Elwina, in Miss Hannah More's tragedy of Percy. 'Although this production,' says a critic in the Times, 'like every other of the excellent and enlightened author, affords equal pleasure and instruction in the perusal, we are not sure that it was ever calculated to obtain very eminent success upon the stage. The language is undoubtedly classical and flowing; the sentiment characteristically natural and pure; the fable uninterrupted; the catastrophe mournful; and the moral of unquestionable utility and truth. With all these requisites to dramatic fortune, the tragedy of Percy does not so strongly rivet the attention, as some other plays less free from striking faults, and composed by writers of far less distinguished talent. Though the versification be sufficiently musical, and in many passages conspicuous for nerve as well as cadence, there is no splendid burst of imagery, nor lofty strain of poetical inspiration. Taste and intelligence have decked their lines in every grace of sculptured beauty: we miss but the presence of that Promethean fire, which could bid the statue 'speak.' It may be objected, moreover, to this drama, that its incidents are too few, and too little diversified. The grand interest which belongs to the unlooked-for preservation of Percy's life, is, perhaps, too soon elicited and expended: and if we mistake not, there is room for doubting whether, at length, he fairly met his death, or was ensnared once more by some unworthy treachery

of Douglas. Neither do we think the passions which are called into play by the solemn events of a history so calamitous, have been very minutely traced, intensely coloured, or powerfully illustrated. We have a general impression that Douglas is racked by jealousy—Elwina by grief—and Percy by disappointment. But we fain would have the home touches of Shakespear.'

Thus far the Times critic: from all which it appears that Miss Hannah More is not like Shakespear. The writer afterwards tries his hand at a comparison between Miss More and Virgil; and the result, after due deliberation, is, that Virgil was the wiser man. The part, however, to which the learned commentator has the most decided objection, is that 'where Elwina steps out of her way to preach rather a lengthy sermon to her father, against war in general, as offensive to the Prince of Peace.'—Now if this writer had thought proper, he might have discovered that the whole play is 'a lengthy sermon,' without poetry or interest, and equally deficient in 'sculptured grace, and Promethean fire.'—We should not have made these remarks, but that the writers in the above paper have a greater knack than any others, of putting a parcel of tall opaque words before them, to blind the eyes of their readers, and hoodwink their own understandings. There is one short word which might be aptly inscribed on its swelling columns—it is the word which Burchell applies to the conversation of some high-flown female critics in the Vicar of Wakefield.

But to have done with this subject. We shall not readily forgive Miss Hannah More's heroine Elwina, for having made us perceive what we had not felt before, that there is a considerable degree of manner and monotony in Miss O'Neill's acting. The peculiar excellence which has been ascribed to Miss O'Neill (indeed over every other actress) is that of *faultless nature*. Mrs. Siddons's acting is said to have greater grandeur, to have possessed loftier flights of passion and imagination; but then it is objected, that it was not a pure imitation of nature. Miss O'Neill's recitation is indeed nearer the common standard of level speaking, as her person is nearer the common size, but we will venture to say that there is as much a tone, a certain stage sing-song in her delivery as in Mrs. Siddons's. Through all the tedious speeches of this play, she preserved the same balanced artificial cadence, the same melancholy tone, as if her words were the continued echo of a long-drawn sigh. There is the same pitch-key, the same alternation of sad sounds in almost every line. We do not insist upon perfection in any one, nor do we mean to decide how far this intonation may be proper in tragedy; but we contend, that Miss O'Neill does not in general speak in a

natural tone of voice, nor as people speak in conversation. Her great excellence is extreme natural sensibility; that is, she perfectly conceives and expresses what would be generally felt by the female mind in the extraordinary and overpowering situations in which she is placed. In truth, in beauty, and in that irresistible pathos, which goes directly to the heart, she has at present no equal, and can have no superior. There were only one or two opportunities for the display of her delightful powers in the character of Elwina, but of these she made the fullest use. The expression of mute grief, when she hears of the death of Percy, in the last act, was as fine as possible: nor could any thing be more natural, more beautiful or affecting, than the manner in which she receives his scarf, and hurries out with it, tremulously clasping it to her bosom. It was one of those moments of still, and breathless passion, in which the tongue is silent, while the heart breaks. We did not approve of her dying scene at all. It was a mere convulsive struggle for breath, the representation of a person in the act of suffocation—one of those agonies of human nature, which, as they do not appeal to the imagination, should not certainly be obtruded on the senses. Once or twice Miss O'Neill dropped her voice so low, and articulated so internally, that we gathered what she said rather from the motion of her lips, than from distinguishing the sound. This in Mr. Kean would be called extravagance. We were heartily glad when the play was over. From the very construction of the plot, it is impossible that any good can come of it till all the parties are dead; and when this catastrophe took place, the audience seemed perfectly satisfied.

WHERE TO FIND A FRIEND

The Examiner. *November* 26, 1815.

A new Comedy, entitled Where to find a Friend, and said to be from the pen of a Mr. Leigh, has been brought out at Drury-Lane Theatre. The Dramatis Personæ are as follows:

General Torrington . . .	Mr. BARTLEY.
Sir Harry Moreden . . .	Mr. WALLACK.
Heartly	Mr. DOWTON.
Young Bustle . . .	Mr. KNIGHT.
Barney	Mr. JOHNSTONE.
Tim	Mr. OXBERRY.
Lady Moreden . . .	Mrs. DAVISON.
Maria	Miss KELLY.
Mrs. Bustle	Mrs. SPARKS.

The story is not easily told, for it is a story almost destitute of events. Sir Harry Moreden has been for some years married to an heiress, a woman of exemplary principles and amiable feelings; but who, as it appears, through no other misconduct than a little playful gaiety of manner, has so far provoked the capricious and irritable temper of her husband, that he writes off to General Torrington, her guardian, gravely proposing a separation. This letter brings the General down from London, in order to learn from the Baronet his real cause of quarrel with his wife; and a singular conversation ensues, in which, to every conjecture of the General's as to the nature of Lady M.'s offences, the unaccountable husband answers in the negative, leaving it to the discernment of her guardian to find out the actual source of his disquietude. This, it appears, in the course of the play, is a certain fashionable levity and sportiveness of manner, with which it is rather extraordinary that Sir Harry should be displeased, as another objection on which he sometimes dwells is the rusticity of his wife's taste, in not having any inclination for the dissipation and frivolities of a town life. Some improbable scenes are however introduced to explain the merits of this matrimonial question, in which the studied levity on one side is contrasted with the unconscious violence on the other, until at length Lady Moreden, hearing from her guardian that her husband is much embarrassed in his circumstances, and almost on the point of ruin, reproaches herself with her thoughtless habit of tormenting him; and prevails upon the General to concur with her in applying her own large fortune, left to her separately by her father's will, to the relief of her husband's distresses: at the moment when Sir Harry is complaining of his not knowing 'where to find a friend,' all his applications to those whom he had considered such having proved unsuccessful, her guardian introduces his wife to him, which produces the reconciliation between them, and gives rise to the title of the play.

In the progress and developement of this story there is very little to interest or surprise: the sentimental part of the comedy is founded on the story of Heartly, whose daughter Maria has run away from him, and been privately married to a man of fashion, but who having, for family reasons, enjoined secresy upon her in his absence abroad, subjects her, in her father's eyes, to the supposed disgrace of a criminal connection. Old Heartly retires into the country in a melancholy state of mind, and Maria, finding herself unexpectedly near to his cottage, determines to throw herself upon his forgiveness, prevails upon an honest old servant to admit her to his presence, supplicates for pardon, and is again received into his affections. This

reconciliation is not well brought about. Her seeking the interview with her father through the connivance of a servant, after the repeated rejection of every application to his tenderness, and when she has an advocate in General Torrington, an old friend of Heartly's, who has undertaken to bring about a reconciliation, is not exceedingly probable. After her clandestine introduction by the servant, the reconciliation is first effected between Heartly and Maria, on the supposition of her guilt, and is afterwards acted as it were twice over, when the sight of a ring on her finger leads to the discovery of her innocence. The comedy opens with the arrival of Maria at a country inn, near Moreden-hall, kept by the widow Bustle. The introductory scene between this veteran lady of the old school, and her son Jack Bustle, who is infected with the modern cant of humanity, and is besides very indecorous in his manners, is tediously long. Maria's depositing the hundred pounds in the hands of Mrs. Bustle is a gratuitous improbability; and it is with some difficulty that the notes are retrieved for the use of the right owner by the busy interference of Mr. Jack Bustle and the generosity of Mr. Barney O'Mulchesen, an honest Irishman, who at the beginning of the play is the ostler, but at the end of it, as he himself informs us, becomes 'the mistress of the Black Lion.'

Johnstone gave great spirit, and an appearance of cordial good humour, to this last character. He has a great deal of 'the milk of human kindness' in all his acting. There is a rich genial suavity of manner, a laughing confidence, a fine oily impudence about him, which must operate as a saving grace to any character he is concerned in, and would make it difficult to hiss him off the stage. In any other hands we think Mr. Barney O'Mulchesen would have stood some chance of being damned. Oxberry's Tim was excellent: in those kind of loose dangling characters, in which the limbs do not seem to hang to the body nor the body to the mind, in which he has to display meanness and poverty of spirit together with a natural love of good fellowship and good cheer, there is nobody equal to Oxberry. His scene with Dowton, his master, who comes home, and finds him just returning from the fair, from the passionateness of the master and the meekness of the man, had a very comic effect. This was the best scene in the play, and the only one in it, which struck us as containing any thing like originality in the conception of humour and character. Of Mrs. Davison's Lady Moreden, we cannot speak favourably, if we are to speak what we think. Her acting is said to have much playfulness about it; if so, it is *horse-play*.

A singularity in the construction of the scenes of this comedy is, that they are nearly an uninterrupted series of tête-à-têtes: the

personages of the drama regularly come on in couples, and the two persons go off the stage to make room for two others to come on, just like the procession to Noah's Ark. Perhaps this principle might be improved upon, by making an entire play of nothing but soliloquies.

Covent-Garden.

Cymon, an opera, by Garrick, was brought out on Monday. It is not very interesting, either in itself or the music. Mr. Duruset played Cymon very naturally, though the compliment is, perhaps, somewhat equivocal. Miss Stephens looked very prettily in Sylvia; but the songs had not any great effect: 'Sweet Passion of Love' was the best of them.

'It is silly sooth, and dallies with the innocence of love.'

Mrs. Liston, who played a little old woman, was encored in the burlesque song, 'Now I am seventy-two.' Mr. Liston's Justice Dorus is a rich treat: his face is certainly a prodigious invention in physiognomy.

MISS O'NEILL'S BELVIDERA

The Examiner. *December* 10, 1815

Miss O'Neill repeated her usual characters last week. We saw her in Belvidera, and were disappointed. We do not think she plays it so well as she did last year. We thought her representation of it then as near perfection as possible; and her present acting we think chargeable in many instances, with affectation and extravagance. She goes into the two extremes of speaking so loud as to 'split the ears of the groundlings' and so low as not to be heard. She has (or we mistake) been taking a bad lesson of Mr. Kean: in our opinion, the excellences of genius are not communicable. A second-rate actor may learn of a first; but all imitation in the latter must prove a source of error: for the power with which great talent works, can only be regulated by its own suggestions and the force of nature. The bodily energy which Mr. Kean exhibits cannot be transferred to female characters, without making them disgusting instead of impressive. Miss O'Neill during the two last acts of Belvidera, is in a continual convulsion. But the intention of tragedy is to exhibit mental passion and not bodily agony, or the last only as a necessary concomitant of the former. Miss O'Neill clings so long about Jaffier, and with such hysterical violence, before she leaps upon his neck and

calls for the fatal blow, that the connection of the action with the sentiment is lost in the pantomime exhibition before us. We are not fastidious; nor do we object to having the painful worked up with the catastrophe to the utmost pitch of human suffering; but we must object to a constant recurrence of such extreme agony, as a convenient common-place or trick to bring down thunders of applause. Miss O'Neill twice, if we remember, seizes her forehead with her clenched fists, making a hissing noise through her teeth, and twice is thrown into a fit of agonized choking. Neither is her face fine enough in itself not to become unpleasant by such extreme and repeated distortion. Miss O'Neill's freedom from mannerism was her great charm, and we should be sorry to see her fall into it. Mr. C. Kemble's Jaffier had very considerable effect. Mr. Young's Pierre is his best character.

A new Farce was brought out here on Monday week, the title of which is What's a Man of Fashion? a question which it does not solve. A young lady (Miss Mathews) is left a fortune by her father, on condition of her marrying a man of fashion within a year of his death. Her aunt (Mrs. Davenport) is left her guardian, and locks her up to prevent her marrying any one, that the fortune may devolve to her. Old Project (personated by Fawcett) is instigated by the young lady, through the key-hole of the door where she is locked up, to find her a husband who shall also be a man of fashion; and just as the old gentleman, who is a very strange mixture of the sailor, fox-hunter, and Bond-street lounger, has undertaken this laudable task, he meets his nephew (Mr. Jones), whom he fixes upon as the candidate for the young lady and for fifty thousand pounds. The whole business of the piece arises out of the attempts of Old Project to bring them together, and the schemes of the aunt to prevent the conclusion of the marriage before the expiration of the year, that is, before it strikes twelve o'clock at night. After many trifling and improbable adventures, Old Project and his nephew succeed. The clock strikes twelve, but the man of fashion and his mistress have been married a few minutes before, though nobody knows how. We do not think this farce a bit better than some we have lately noticed. The author seems to have sat down to write it without a plot. There is neither dialogue nor character in it, nor has it any thing to make it amusing, but the absurdity of the incidents.

We have seen Miss O'Neill in the Orphan, and almost repent of

what we have said above. Her Monimia is a piece of acting as beautiful as it is affecting. We never wish to see it acted otherwise or better. She is the Orphan that Otway drew.

> 'With pleas'd attention 'midst his scenes we find
> Each glowing thought that warms the female mind;
> Each melting sigh and every tender tear,
> The lover's wishes, and the virgin's fear,
> His every strain the Smiles and Graces own.'

This idea of the character, which never leaves the mind in reading the play, was delightfully represented on the stage. Miss O'Neill did not once overstep the limits of propriety, and was interesting in every part. Her conversation with the page was delicately familiar and playful. Her death was judiciously varied, and did not affect the imagination less, because it gave no shock to the senses. Her greatest effort, however, was in the scene with Polydore, where she asks him, 'Where did you rest last night?' and where she falls senseless on the floor at his answer. The breathless expectation, the solemn injunction, the terror which the discovery strikes to her heart as if she had been struck with lightning, had an irresistible effect. Nothing could be pourtrayed with greater truth and feeling. We liked Charles Kemble's Castalio not much, and Mr. Conway's Polydore not at all. It is impossible that this gentleman should become an actor, unless he could take 'a cubit from his stature.' Mr. Young's Chamont was quite as good as the character deserves.

Mr. Kean's appearance at Drury-Lane on Tuesday, in the Duke Aranza, in the Honey Moon, excited considerable expectations in the public. Our own were not fulfilled. We think this the least brilliant of all his characters. It was Duke and no Duke. It had severity without dignity; and was deficient in ease, grace, and gaiety. He played the feigned character as if it were reality. Now we believe that a spirit of raillery should be thrown over the part, so as to carry off the gravity of the imposture. There is in Mr. Kean an infinite variety of talent, with a certain monotony of genius. He has not the same ease in doing common things that he has energy on great occasions. We seldom entirely lose sight of his Richard, and to a certain degree, in all his acting, '*he still plays the dog*.' His dancing was encored. George II. encored Garrick in the *Minuet de la Cour*: Mr. Kean's was not like court dancing. It had more alacrity than ease.

A VIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE

THE MERCHANT OF BRUGES

The Examiner. *December* 17, 1815.

The Merchant of Bruges; or, The Beggars' Bush, altered from Beaumont and Fletcher, was brought out at Drury-Lane on Thursday, with great preparation, applause, and effect. Contrary, we believe, to Green-room expectation, it answered completely. This, assuredly, is not a classical drama; but the spirit of poetry constantly peeps out from beneath the rags, and patches, and miserable disguise, in which it is clothed. Where the eye was most offended by the want of costume, songs and music came to its relief. The airs selected by Mr. T. Cooke were admirably adapted to the situations, and we need not remind the critical reader, that the lyrical effusions in Beaumont and Fletcher are master-pieces in their kind. They are exactly fitted to be either 'said or sung' under the green-wood tree. One or two of these were sung separately, with a good deal of sweetness and characteristic *naiveté*, by Miss L. Kelly, who is one of the supposed beggars, but a princess in disguise. Either we mistook certain significant intimations, or she wished to make this appear before the proper time. One of the oddest transformations in the Beggars' Bush, was, that it inspired Mr. Holland with no small degree of animation and fancy; for he depicted the worthy Clause, who is at the same time the King of the Beggars, the Father of the Merchant of Bruges, and the old Earl of Flanders, inimitably well.

Again, Mr. Oxberry and Harley were most respectable Beggars, and had their cues perfect (which was more than Mr. Pope had in the prologue); Mr. Kean topped his part as the Merchant-Earl, Mr. Munden was not far behind him as the drunken Burgo-master, and Mr. S. Penley, Mr. Rae, and Mr. Raymond, served to fill the stage. The scenes from which this play derived its interest, and which both for sentiment and situation were admirable, are those in which Mr. Kean vindicates his character as a Merchant and his love for Gertrude against the arrogant assumptions of her uncle (Raymond), and disarms the latter in the fight. His retort upon the noble baron, who accuses him of being a barterer of pepper and sugar, 'that every petty lord lived upon his rents or the sale of his beves, his poultry, his milk and his butter,' made a forcible appeal to John Bull, nor did the manner in which Munden, who is bottle-holder on the occasion, vociferated, 'Don't forget butter,' take away from the effect. The whole of this scene is (if not in the best) in the most peculiar and striking manner of Beaumont and Fletcher. It

is the very petulance of youthful ardour and aspiring self-opinion, defying and taunting the frigid prejudices of age and custom. If Mr. Kean's voice failed him, his expression and his action did full justice to the heroic spirit and magnanimity of conception of the poet, where he says to his mistress, after depriving his antagonist of his sword, 'Within these arms thou art safe as in a wall of brass,' and again, folding her to his breast, exclaims, 'Come, kiss me, love,' and afterwards rising in his extravagant importunity, 'Come, say before all these, say that thou lov'st me.' We do not think any of the German dramatic paradoxes come up to this in spirit, and in acting as it were up to the feeling of the moment, irritated by a triumph over long-established and insolent pretension. The scene between Mr. Kean and Gertrude (Mrs. Horn), where he is in a manner distracted between his losses and his love, had great force and feeling. We have seen him do much the same thing before. There is a very fine pulsation in the veins of his forehead on these occasions, an expression of nature which we do not remember in any other actor. One of the last scenes, in which *Clause* brings in the money-bags to the creditors, and Kean bends forward pointing to them, and Munden after him, repeating the same attitude, but caricaturing it, was a perfect *coup-de-théatre*. The last scene rather disappointed our expectations; but the whole together went off admirably, and every one went away satisfied.

The story of the Merchant of Bruges is founded on the usurped authority of Woolmar, as Earl of Flanders, to the exclusion of Gerald, the rightful heir, and his infant son Floris; the latter of whom, on his father being driven out by the usurper, has been placed with a rich merchant of Bruges; whilst the father, with his infant daughter, takes refuge among a band of Beggars, whose principal resort is in a wood near the town of Bruges. Young Floris is brought up by the merchant as his own son; and on the death of his protector, whom he considers as his real father, succeeds to his property, and becomes the principal merchant in Bruges. Gerald, in the mean time, is elected King of the Beggars; and, by the influence which his authority gives him over the fraternity, he is enabled to assist his son with a large sum of money at a time when he is on the verge of bankruptcy, owing to the non-arrival of several vessels richly laden, and which are detained by contrary winds. This circumstance gives the supposed Beggar considerable influence over the actions of his son, who declares himself ready to pay him the duties of a son, without being at all suspicious that it is indeed his real parent whom he is thus obeying; and Gerald, determining to reveal to his son the mystery of his birth, appoints an interview with him at midnight, near

the Beggar's Bush, in the Forest. In the mean time Woolmar, having learnt that Gerald and Floris, whom he supposes dead, are still living, and that Gerald is concealed amongst the Beggars, goes with a troop of horse at midnight to the Beggar's Bush, for the purpose of surprising him. His plan is, however, circumvented by Hubert, a nobleman at the court of Woolmar, but who is secretly attached to the right heir. Hubert conveys intelligence of the intended attempt of Woolmar to Gerald, and a strong band of the Beggars are armed, and set in readiness to seize him on his entering a particular part of the forest, to which he is enticed by Hubert, under pretence of leading him to the spot where Gerald is concealed. Here they arrive just at the time Floris, by appointment, meets his father Gerald. Woolmar falls into the trap prepared for him, and is, with his principal confidant, Hemskirk, secured. An explanation takes place, and Gerald resigning his pretensions to his son, Floris, the Merchant is restored to the possession of the earldom of Flanders, and Woolmar, the usurping Earl, is banished for life.

SMILES AND TEARS

The Examiner. *December* 24, 1815.

A new piece in five acts, called Smiles and Tears; or the Widow's Stratagem, has been producéd, with very considerable success, at Covent-Garden Theatre. The Dramatis Personæ are:

Mr. Fitzharding	Mr. YOUNG.
Sir Henry Chomley . . .	Mr. C. KEMBLE.
Colonel O'Donolan . . .	Mr. JONES.
Mr. Stanley	Mr. FAWCETT.
Mr. Delaval	Mr. ABBOTT.
Lady Emily	Mrs. C. KEMBLE.
Mrs. Belmore	Mrs. FAUCIT.
Miss Fitzharding . . .	Miss FOOTE.

The plot is as follows: Lady Emily, a young widow supposed to possess every amiable quality of body and mind, has for her intimate friend Mrs. Belmore, who is also a widow, and engaged in a law-suit with Sir Henry Chomley, by which she is likely to lose her whole fortune. Sir Henry has by chance met Lady Emily at a masquerade, where he has become deeply enamoured of her figure, wit, and vivacity, without having ever seen her face; and having at length obtained information who she is, and where she resides, writes to her, soliciting an interview, and declaring the impression which her person

and conversation had made on his heart. Lady Emily being herself sincerely attached to Colonel O'Donolan, determines to convert the passion of Sir Henry to the advantage of her friend Mrs. Belmore; and as they have never seen each other, to introduce Mrs. Belmore to Sir Henry as Lady Emily: but, aware that Mrs. Belmore will not receive Sir Henry's addresses, whom she regards as her enemy, on account of the law-suit between them, she writes to Sir Henry that she will admit his visits, but that it must, for particular reasons, be under the assumed name of Grenville; and as Mr. Grenville, she prevails on Mrs. Belmore to receive him in the name of Lady Emily, assigning as her reason for this request, her fear of seeing him herself, lest the Colonel's jealousy should be excited. Several interviews take place between Sir Henry and Mrs. Belmore, who conceive so warm an attachment for each other, under their assumed characters, that when the widow's stratagem is discovered, they gladly agree to put an end to their law-suit by a matrimonial union. The other, and the most afflicting part of the plot, turns on a stratagem conceived by Lady Emily (who it must be allowed is fruitful in stratagems), to restore Fitzharding to his reason, and his daughter to his affections, both of which had been lost by the dishonourable conduct of Delaval, who had first seduced, and then deserted the lovely and unsuspecting Cicely Fitzharding.

All that is particularly good in this play arises from the mistakes and surprises produced by the double confusion of the names of the principal characters concerned in the Widow's Stratagem. The scene between Charles Kemble and Jones, when the former acquaints him with his success with the supposed Lady Emily, and in which Jones testifies a resentment against his rival as violent as it is in reality groundless, was in the true spirit of comedy. Jones's scene with the Widow Belmore (Mrs. Faucit), in which the mystery is cleared up to him, is also conceived and executed with great spirit and effect. The character which Jones represents, an Irish Colonel, is one of the most misplaced and absurd we remember to have seen, and the only excuse for whose blunders, rudeness, officiousness, and want of common sense, is (as far as we could learn), that he is a countryman of Lord Wellington. This is but an indifferent compliment to his Grace, and perhaps no great one to Colonel O'Donolan. There were two direct clap-traps aimed directly at the Duke's popularity, which did not take. The truth, we suspect, is, that his Lordship is not very popular at present in either of his two great characters, as liberator of Ferdinand VII. or as keeper of Louis XVIII. Charles Kemble played the part of Sir Henry Chomley with that gentlemanly ease, gaiety, and good nature, which always gain him the entire favour of the

audience in such characters. He indeed did as much for this play as if it had been his own. Mrs. Faucit played Mrs. Belmore exceedingly well. There was something that reminded us of a jointure and a view to a second match in her whole look and air. We cannot speak a word of praise of Mrs. C. Kemble's Lady Emily. Neither her person nor her manner at all suited the character, nor the description of it which is several times interlarded in the dialogue. Her walk is not the fine lady; she is nearly the worst actress we ever saw in the artificial *mimmine-pimmine* style of Miss Farren. We hope she will discontinue such characters, and return to nature; or she will make us forget her Lucy Lockitt, or what we should hope never to forget, her acting in Julio in Deaf and Dumb.

There is a great deal of affectation of gentility, and a great deal of real indecorum, in the comic dialogue of this play. The tragic part is violent and vulgar in the extreme. Mr. Young is brought forward as a downright common madman, just broke loose from a madhouse at Richmond, and is going with a club to dash out the brains of his daughter, Miss Foote, and her infant. This infant is no other than a large wooden doll: it fell on the floor the other evening without receiving any hurt, at which the audience laughed. This dreadful interlude is taken, we suppose, from Mrs. Opie's tale of Father and Daughter, of which we thought never to have heard or seen any thing more. As the whole of this part is conceived without the smallest poetical feeling, so Mr. Young did not contrive to throw one ray of genius over it. Miss Foote behaved throughout very prettily, dutifully and penitently; and in the last scene, where, to bring back her father's senses, she is made to stand in a frame and to represent her own portrait playing on the harp, she looked a perfect picture.

GEORGE BARNWELL

The Examiner. *December* 31, 1815.

George Barnwell has been acted as usual at both Theatres during the Christmas week. Whether this is 'a custom more honoured in the breach or the observance,' we shall not undertake to decide. But there is one error on this subject which we wish to correct; which is, that its defects arise from its being too natural. It is one of the most improbable and purely arbitrary fictions we have ever seen. Lillo is by some people considered as a kind of natural Shakespear, and Shakespear as a poetical Lillo. We look upon Shakespear to have been a greater man than the Ordinary of Newgate; and we

at the same time conceive that there is not any one of the stories in the Newgate Calendar so badly told as this tragedy of Lillo's. Lillo seems to have proceeded on the old Scotch proverb,

'The kirk is gude, and the gallows is gude.'

He comes with his moral lessons and his terrible examples; a sermon in the morning and an execution at night; the tolling of the bell for Tyburn follows hard upon the bell that knolls to church. Nothing can be more virtuous or prudent than George Barnwell at the end of the first act, or a more consummate rogue and fool than he is at the beginning of the second. This play is a piece of wretched cant; it is an insult on the virtues and the vices of human nature; it supposes that the former are relinquished and the others adopted without common sense or reason, for the sake of a Christmas catastrophe, of a methodistical moral. The account of a young unsuspecting man being seduced by the allurements of an artful prostitute is natural enough, and something might have been built on this foundation, but all the rest is absurd, and equally senseless as poetry or prose. It is a caricature on the imbecility of goodness, and of the unprovoked and gratuitous depravity of vice. Shakespear made 'these odds more even;' that is, he drew from nature, and did not drag the theatre into the service of the conventicle. George Barnwell first robs his master at Milwood's instigation: (this lady has the merit of being what Dr. Johnson would have called 'a good hater'). He then, being in want of money, proceeds to rob and murder somebody; and in the way of deliberation and selection fixes upon his uncle, his greatest friend and benefactor, as if he were the only man in the world who carried a purse. He therefore goes to seek him in his solitary walks, where, good man, he is reading a book on the shortness and uncertainty of human life, bursting out, as he reads, into suitable comments, which, as his ungracious nephew, who watches behind him in crape, says, shews that 'he is the fitter for heaven.' Well, he turns round, and sees that he is way-laid by some one; but his nephew, at the sight of his benign and well-known aspect, drops the pistol, but presently after stabs him to the heart. This is no sooner effected without remorse or pity, but the instant it is over, he loses all thought of the purpose which had instigated him to the act, the securing his property (not that it appears he had any about him), and this raw, desperate convert to vice returns to his mistress, to say that he had committed the murder, and omitted the robbery. On being questioned as to the *proceeds* of so nefarious a business, our retrospective enthusiast asks, 'Could he lay sacrilegious hands on the body he had just murdered?' to which his cooler and more rational

accomplice replies, 'That as he had robbed him of his life, which was no doubt precious to him, she did not see why he should not rifle his pockets of that which, being dead, could be of no farther use to him.' However, Barnwell makes such a noise with his virtue and his penitence, that she is alarmed for the consequences; and anticipating a discovery of the whole, calls in the constable, and gives up her companion as a measure of precaution. Her maid, however, who is her confidante, has been before-hand with her, and she is also taken into custody, and both are hanged. Such is the morality of this piece.

THE BUSY BODY

The Examiner. *January* 7, 1816.

The admirable Comedy of the Busy Body was brought out at Drury-Lane Theatre on Wednesday, for the purpose of introducing Mrs. Mardyn in Miranda. She acted the part very delightfully, and without at all overdoing it. We seem to regret her former luxuriance of manner, and think she might take greater liberties with the public, without offence. Though she has lost some of the heyday vivacity of her natural spirits, she looks as charmingly as ever.

Mr. Dowton's Gripe was not one of his best performances. It is very much a character of grimace, and Munden perhaps would do it better on this account, for he is the greatest caricaturist on the stage. It was the character in which he originally appeared. We never saw him in it, but in several parts we missed his broad shining face, the orbicular rolling of his eye, and the alarming drop of his chin. Mr. Dowton, however, gave the whining tones and the dotage of fondness very well, and 'his voice pipes and whistles in the sound, like second childishness.' If any thing, he goes too far in this, and drawls out his ecstasies too much into the tabernacle sing-song.

Mr. Harley played Marplot in a very lively and amusing manner. He presented a very laughable picture of blundering vivacity and blank stupidity. This gentleman is the most *moveable* actor on the stage. He runs faster and stops shorter than any body else. There was but one fault in his delineation of the character. The officious Marplot is a gentleman, a foolish one, to be sure; but Harley played it like a footman. We observed also, that when Mr. Harley got very deserved applause by his manner of strutting, and sidling, and twisting himself about in the last scene, where he fights, he continued to repeat the same gestures over again, as if he had been *encored* by the audience.

We cannot close these remarks, without expressing the satisfaction which we received from this play. It is not so profound in wit or character as some other of the old Comedies, but it is nothing but bustle and gaiety from beginning to end. The plot never ceases. The ingenuity of contrivance is admirable. The developement of the story is an uninterrupted series of what the French call *coups de théatre*, and the situations succeed one another like the changes of machinery in a pantomime. It is a true comic pantomime.

A lady of the name of Barnes has appeared in Desdemona at this Theatre. Her voice is powerful, her face is pretty, but her person is too *petite* and undignified for tragedy. Her conception of the part was good, and she gave to some of the scenes considerable feeling and effect; but who shall represent 'the divine Desdemona?'

Mr. Kean's Othello is his best character, and the highest effort of genius on the stage. We say this without any exception or reserve. Yet we wish it was better than it is. In parts, we think he rises as high as human genius can go: at other times, though powerful, the whole effort is thrown away in a wrong direction, and disturbs our idea of the character. There are some technical objections. Othello was tall; but that is nothing: he was black, but that is nothing. But he was not fierce, and that is every thing. It is only in the last agony of human suffering that he gives way to his rage and his despair, and it is in working his noble nature up to that extremity, that Shakespear has shewn his genius and his vast power over the human heart. It was in raising passion to its height, from the lowest beginnings and in spite of all obstacles, in shewing the conflict of the soul, the tug and war between love and hatred, rage, tenderness, jealousy, remorse, in laying open the strength and the weaknesses of human nature, in uniting sublimity of thought with the anguish of the keenest woe, in putting in motion all the springs and impulses which make up this our mortal being, and at last blending them in that noble tide of deep and sustained passion, impetuous, but majestic, 'that flows on to the Propontic and knows no ebb,' that the great excellence of Shakespear lay. Mr. Kean is in general all passion, all energy, all relentless will. He wants imagination, that faculty which contemplates events, and broods over feelings with a certain calmness and grandeur; his feelings almost always hurry on to action, and hardly ever repose upon themselves. He is too often in the highest key of passion, too uniformly on the verge of extravagance, too constantly on the rack. This does very well in certain characters, as Zanga or Bajazet, where there is merely a physical passion, a

boiling of the blood to be expressed, but it is not so in the lofty-minded and generous Moor.

We make these remarks the more freely, because there were parts of the character in which Mr. Kean shewed the greatest sublimity and pathos, by laying aside all violence of action. For instance, the tone of voice in which he delivered the beautiful apostrophe, 'Then, oh, farewell!' struck on the heart like the swelling notes of some divine music, like the sound of years of departed happiness. Why not all so, or all that is like it? why not speak the affecting passage —'I found not Cassio's kisses on her lips'—why not speak the last speech, in the same manner? They are both of them, we do most strenuously contend, speeches of pure pathos, of thought, and feeling, and not of passion, venting itself in violence of action or gesture. Again, the look, the action, the expression of voice, with which he accompanied the exclamation, 'Not a jot, not a jot,' was perfectly heart-rending. His vow of revenge against Cassio, and his abandonment of his love for Desdemona, were as fine as possible. The whole of the third act had an irresistible effect upon the house, and indeed is only to be paralleled by the murder scene in Macbeth. Mr. Pope's Iago was better acted than usual, but he does not look the character. Mr. Holland's drunken scene was, as it always is, excellent.

A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS

The Examiner. *January* 14, 1816.

Massinger's play of A New Way to Pay Old Debts, which has been brought out at Drury-Lane Theatre to introduce Mr. Kean in the part of Sir Giles Overreach, must have afforded a rich treat to theatrical amateurs. There is something in a good play well acted, a peculiar charm, that makes us forget ourselves and all the world.

It has been considered as the misfortune of great talents for the stage, that they leave no record behind them, except that of vague rumour, and that the genius of a great actor perishes with him, 'leaving the world no copy.' This is a misfortune, or at least a mortifying reflection, to actors; but it is, we conceive, an advantage to the stage. It leaves an opening to originality. The stage is always beginning anew; the candidates for theatrical reputation are always setting out afresh, unincumbered by the affectation of the faults or excellences of their predecessors. In this respect, we conceive that the average quantity of dramatic talent remains more nearly the same than that in any other walk of art. In the other arts, (as

painting and poetry), it may be supposed that what has been well done already, by giving rise to endless vapid imitations, is an obstacle to what might be done hereafter: that the models or *chef d'œuvres* of art, where they are accumulated, choke up the path to excellence; and that the works of genius, where they can be rendered permanent, and transmitted from age to age, not only prevent, but render superfluous, future productions of the same kind. We have not, neither do we want, two Shakespears, two Miltons, two Raphaels, two Popes, any more than we require two suns in the same sphere. Even Miss O'Neill stands a little in the way (and it is paying her a great compliment to say so) of our recollections of Mrs. Siddons. But Mr. Kean is an excellent substitute for the memory of Garrick, whom we never saw! When an author dies, it is no matter, for his works remain. When a great actor dies, there is a void produced in society, a gap which requires to be filled up. Who does not go to see Kean? Who, if Garrick were alive, would go to see him? At least, either one or the other must have quitted the stage; 'For two at a time there's no mortal could bear.' Again, we know that Mr. Kean cannot have been spoiled by Garrick. He might indeed have been spoiled by Mr. Kemble or Mr. Cooke, but he fortunately has not. The stage is a place where genius is sure to come upon its legs in a generation or two. We cannot conceive of better actors than some of those we now have. In Comedy, Liston is as good as Edwin was when we were school-boys. We grant that we are deficient in genteel comedy; we have no fine gentlemen or ladies on the stage—nor off it. That which is merely artificial and local is a matter of mimicry, and must exist, to be well copied. Players, however, have little reason to complain of their hard-earned, short-lived popularity. One thunder of applause from pit, boxes, and galleries, is equal to a whole immortality of posthumous fame; and when we hear an actor whose modesty is equal to his merit, declare that he would like to see a dog wag his tail in approbation, what must he feel when he sets the whole house in a roar? Besides, Fame, as if their reputation had been entrusted to her alone, has been particularly careful of the renown of her theatrical favourites; she forgets one by one, and year by year, those who have been great lawyers, great statesmen, and great warriors in their day; but the name of Garrick still survives, with the works of Reynolds and of Johnson.

We do not know any one now-a-days, who could write Massinger's Comedy of A New Way to Pay Old Debts, though we do not believe that it was better acted at the time it was first brought out, than it is at present. We cannot conceive of any one's doing Mr. Kean's part of Sir Giles Overreach so well as himself. We have

seen others in the part, superior in the look and costume, in hardened, clownish, rustic insensibility; but in the soul and spirit, no one equal to him. He is a truly great actor. This is one of his very best parts. He was not at a single fault. The passages which we remarked as particularly striking and original, were those where he expresses his surprise at his nephew's answers, 'His fortune swells him!—'Tis rank, he's married!' and again, where, after the exposure of his villanies, he calls to his accomplice Marall in a half-wheedling, half-terrific tone, 'Come hither Marall, come hither.' Though the speech itself is absurd and out of character, his manner of stopping when he is running at his foes, 'I'm feeble, some widow's curse hangs on my sword,' was exactly as if his arm had been suddenly withered, and his powers shrivelled up on the instant. The conclusion was quite overwhelming. Mr. Kean looked the part well, and his voice does not fail as it used to do. Mr. Munden's Marall was an admirable piece of acting, and produced some of the most complete comic contrasts we ever saw. He overdoes his parts sometimes, and sometimes gets into parts for which he is not fit: but he has a fine broad face and manner which tells all the world over. His manner of avoiding the honour of a salute from the Lady Allworth, was a most deliberate piece of humour; and the account of the unexpected good fortune of young Welborn almost converts his eyes into saucers, and chokes him with surprise.

Mr. Oxberry's Justice Greedy was very entertaining, both from the subject and from his manner of doirg it. Oxberry is a man of a practical imagination, and the apparitions of fat turkeys, chines of bacon, and pheasants dressed in toast and butter, evidently floated in rapturous confusion before his senses. There is nothing that goes down better than what relates to eating and drinking, on the stage, in books, or in real life. Mr. Har'ey's Welborn was indifferent, but he is upon the whole a very pleasant actor. Mrs. Glover, as Lady Allworth, puts on some very agreeable frowns: and Mr. Holland's Lord Lovell was one continued smile, without any meaning that we could discover, unless this actor, after his disguise in the Beggar's Bush, was delighted with the restoration of his hat and feather.

THE MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

The Examiner. *January* 21, 1816.

We hope we have not been accessory to murder, in recommending a delightful poem to be converted into a dull pantomime; for such is the fate of the Midsummer Night's Dream. We have found to our

cost, once for all, that the regions of fancy and the boards of Covent-Garden are not the same thing. All that is fine in the play, was lost in the representation. The spirit was evaporated, the genius was fled; but the spectacle was fine: it was that which saved the play-Oh, ye scene-shifters, ye scene-painters, ye machinists and dress-makers, ye manufacturers of moon and stars that give no light, ye musical composers, ye men in the orchestra, fiddlers and trumpeters and players on the double drum and loud bassoon, rejoice! This is your triumph; it is not ours: and ye full-grown, well-fed, substantial, real fairies, Messieurs Treby, and Truman, and Atkins, and Misses Matthews, Carew, Burrell, and Mac Alpine, we shall remember you: we shall believe no more in the existence of your fantastic tribe. Flute the bellows-mender, Snug the joiner, Starveling the tailor, farewell! you have lost the charm of your names; but thou, Nic Bottom, thou valiant Bottom, what shall we say to thee? Thou didst console us much; thou didst perform a good part well; thou didst top the part of Bottom the weaver! He comes out of thy hands as clean and clever a fellow as ever. Thou art a person of exquisite whim and humour; and thou didst hector over thy companions well, and fall down flat before the Duke, like other bullies, well; and thou didst sing the song of the Black Ousel well; but chief, thou didst noddle thy ass's head, which had been put upon thee, well; and didst seem to say, significantly, to thy new attendants, Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustard-seed, 'Gentlemen, I can present you equally to my friends, and to my enemies!'[1]

All that was good in this piece (except the scenery) was Mr. Liston's Bottom, which was an admirable and judicious piece of acting. Mr. Conway was Theseus. Who would ever have taken this gentleman for the friend and companion of Hercules? Miss Stephens played the part of Hermia, and sang several songs very delightfully, which however by no means assisted the progress or interest of the story. Miss Foote played Helena. She is a very sweet girl, and not at all a bad actress; yet did any one feel or even hear her address to Hermia? To shew how far asunder the closet and the stage are, we give it here once more entire:

'Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid,
Have you conspired, have you with these contriv'd
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,

[1] What Louis XVIII. said to his new National Guards.

The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us—Oh! and is all forgot?
All school days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial Gods,
Created with our needles both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion;
Both warbling of one song, both in one key;
As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition.
And will you rend our ancient love asunder,
And join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:
Our sex as well as I may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.'

In turning to Shakespear to look for this passage, the book opened at the Midsummer Night's Dream, the title of which half gave us back our old feeling; and in reading this one speech twice over, we have completely forgot all the noise we have heard and the sights we have seen. Poetry and the stage do not agree together. The attempt to reconcile them fails not only of effect, but of decorum. The *ideal* has no place upon the stage, which is a picture without perspective; every thing there is in the foreground. That which is merely an airy shape, a dream, a passing thought, immediately becomes an unmanageable reality. Where all is left to the imagination, every circumstance has an equal chance of being kept in mind, and tells according to the mixed impression of all that has been suggested. But the imagination cannot sufficiently qualify the impressions of the senses. Any offence given to the eye is not to be got rid of by explanation. Thus Bottom's head in the play is a fantastic illusion, produced by magic spells: on the stage it is an ass's head, and nothing more; certainly a very strange costume for a gentleman to appear in. Fancy cannot be represented any more than a simile can be painted; and it is as idle to attempt it as to personate Wall or Moonshine. Fairies are not incredible, but fairies six feet high are so. Monsters are not shocking, if they are seen at a proper distance. When ghosts appear in mid-day, when apparitions stalk along Cheapside, then may the Midsummer Night's Dream be represented at Covent-Garden or at Drury-Lane; for we hear, that it is to be brought out there also, and that we have to undergo another crucifixion.

Mrs. Faucit played the part of Titania very well, but for one

circumstance—that she is a woman. The only glimpse which we caught of the possibility of acting the imaginary scenes properly, was from the little girl who dances before the fairies (we do not know her name), which seemed to shew that the whole might be carried off in the same manner—by a miracle.

Drury-Lane.

The admirable comedy of a New Way to Pay Old Debts, continues to be acted with increased effect. Mr. Kean is received with shouts of applause in Sir Giles Overreach. We have heard two objections to his manner of doing this part, one of which we think right and the other not. When he is asked, 'Is he not moved by the orphan's tears, the widow's curse?' he answers—'Yes—as rocks by waves, or the moon by howling wolves.' Mr. Kean, in speaking the latter sentence, dashes his voice about with the greatest violence, and howls out his indignation and rage. Now we conceive this is wrong: for he has to express not violence, but firm, inflexible resistance to it,—not motion, but rest. The very pause after the word *yes*, points out the cool deliberate way in which it should be spoken. The other objection is to his manner of pronouncing the word 'Lord,—Right Honourable Lord,' which Mr. Kean uniformly does in a drawling tone, with a mixture of fawning servility and sarcastic contempt. This has been thought inconsistent with the part, and with the desire which Sir Giles has to ennoble his family by alliance with a 'Lord, a Right Honourable Lord.' We think Mr. Kean never shewed more genius than in pronouncing this single word, *Lord*. It is a complete exposure (produced by the violence of the character), of the elementary feelings which make up the common respect excited by mere rank. This is nothing but a cringing to power and opinion, with a view to turn them to our own advantage with the world. Sir Giles is one of those knaves, who 'do themselves homage.' He makes use of Lord Lovell merely as the stalking-horse of his ambition. In other respects, he has the greatest contempt for him, and the necessity he is under of paying court to him for his own purposes, infuses a double portion of gall and bitterness into the expression of his self-conscious superiority. No; Mr. Kean was perfectly right in this, he spoke the word 'Lord' *con amore*. His praise of the kiss, 'It came twanging off—I like it,' was one of his happiest passages. It would perhaps be as well, if in the concluding scene he would contrive not to frighten the ladies into hysterics. But the whole together is admirable.

LOVE FOR LOVE

The Examiner. *January* 28, 1816.

Congreve's Comedy of Love for Love is, in wit and elegance, perhaps inferior to the Way of the World; but it is unquestionably the best-acting of all his plays. It abounds in dramatic situation, in incident, in variety of character. Still (such is the power of good writing) we prefer reading it in the closet, to seeing it on the stage. As it was acted the other night at Drury-Lane Theatre, many of the finest traits of character were lost. Though Love for Love is much less a tissue of epigrams than his other plays, the author has not been able to keep his wit completely under. Jeremy is almost as witty and learned as his master.—The part which had the greatest effect in the acting was Munden's Foresight. We hardly ever saw a richer or more powerful piece of comic acting. It was done to the life, and indeed somewhat over; but the effect was irresistible. His look was planet-struck, his dress and appearance like one of the signs of the Zodiac taken down. We never saw any thing more bewildered. Parsons, if we remember right, gave more imbecility, more of the doating garrulity of age, to the part, and blundered on with a less determined air of stupidity.—Mr. Dowton did not make much of Sir Sampson Legend. He looked well, like a hale, hearty old gentleman, with a close bob-wig, and bronze complexion;—but that was all. We were very much amused with Mr. Harley's *Tattle*. His indifference in the scene where he breaks off his engagement with Miss Prue, was very entertaining. In the scene in which he teaches her how to make love, he was less successful: he delivered his lessons to his fair disciple with the air of a person giving good advice, and did not seem to have a proper sense of his good fortune. 'Desire to please, and you will infallibly please,' is an old maxim, and Mr. Harley is an instance of the truth of it. This actor is always in the best possible humour with himself and the audience. He is as happy as if he had jumped into the very part which he liked the best of all others. Mr. Rae, on the contrary, who played Valentine, apparently feels as little satisfaction as he communicates. He always acts with an air of injured excellence.

Mrs. Mardyn's Miss Prue was not one of her most successful characters. It was a little hard and coarse. It was not fond and yielding enough. Miss Prue is made of the most susceptible materials. She played the hoydening parts best, as where she cries out, 'School 's up, school 's up!'—and she knocked off Mr. Bartley's hat with great good-will.—Mr. Bartley was Ben; and we confess we think Miss Prue's distaste to him very natural. We cannot make up

our minds to like this actor; and yet we have no fault to find with him. For instance, he played the character of Ben very properly; that is, just like 'a great sea-porpoise.' There is an art of qualifying such a part in a manner to carry off its disagreeableness, which Mr. Bartley wants.—Mrs. Harlowe's Mrs. Frail was excellent: she appeared to be the identical Mrs. Frail, with all her airs of mincing affectation, and want of principle. The character was seen quite in dishabille. The scene between her and her sister Mrs. Foresight, about the discovery of the pin—'And pray sister where did you find that pin?'—was managed with as much coolness as any thing of this sort that ever happened in real life.—Mrs. Orger played Mrs. Foresight with much ease and natural propriety. She in general reposes too much on her person, and does not display all the animation of which the character is susceptible. She is also too much in female parts, what the *walking fine gentleman* of the stage used to be in male. Mr. Barnard played Jeremy with a smart shrug in his shoulders, and the trusty air of a valet in his situation.

THE ANGLADE FAMILY

The Examiner. *February* 4, 1816.

The well known collection of French trials, under the title of *Causes Celebres*, has served as the ground-work of a new piece, brought out on Thursday at Drury-Lane Theatre, called Accusation, or The Anglade Family. The old historical materials are rather scanty, consisting only of a narrative of a robbery committed on a nobleman by some members of his own household, for which a M. D'Anglade, who with his family occupied part of the same hotel, was condemned on false evidence to the gallies, where grief and mortification put a period to his life before his innocence was discovered. On this foundation an interesting drama has been raised by the French author. M. Valmore is introduced as a lover of Madame D'Anglade, who rejects his unlawful passion. In revenge, he agrees with a worthless valet to rob his aunt, who resides under the same roof with the family of M. D'Anglade, in whose hands part of the stolen property (consisting of bank-notes—a trifling anachronism) is treacherously deposited by an accomplice of Hubert, Valmore's servant, under pretence of paying for jewels which D'Anglade is compelled to dispose of to satisfy the demands made upon him by a relation who was supposed to have been dead, and whose estate he had inherited. He is seized under strong circum-

stances of suspicion by the police, and conveyed to prison; but the agents of Valmore are detected in stealing away with part of the property from the place where it had been secreted: they are stopped separately by the domestics of the injured person—each is made to believe that his accomplice has betrayed him—and on the manifestation of D'Anglade's innocence and of his own guilt, Valmore, unable to escape the pursuit of the officers of justice, puts an end to his existence with a pistol, in a summer-house in which he has in vain tried to conceal himself.

The interest excited is much of the same kind as in the Maid and the Magpye: and we think the piece will be almost as great a favourite with the public. There is a great deal of ingenuity shewn in the developement of the plot; the scenic effect is often beautiful, and the situations have real pathos.

The acting was upon the whole excellent. Miss Kelly, as the wife of the unfortunate D'Anglade, gave a high degree of interest to the story. She was only less delightful in this character than in that of the Maid of Paliseau, because she has less to do in it. Mr. Rae was the hero of the present drama, and he acquitted himself in it with considerable applause. We never saw Mr. Bartley to so much advantage as in the rough, honest character of the relation of D'Anglade, (we forget the name), who comes to claim restitution of his fortune, to try the integrity of his old friend, but who generously offers him his assistance as soon as he finds him plunged in distress. Mr. Wallack was Valmore, and there was a scene of really fine acting between him and Mrs. Glover, (the Countess of Servan, his aunt), where she tries to probe the guilty conscience of her nephew, and to induce him to release D'Anglade from his dangerous situation, by a confession of the treachery of which he has been made the victim. Mr. S. Penley played the part of the unprincipled valet very unexceptionably, and Mr. Barnard made an admirable accomplice, in the character of a strolling Italian musician. Knight, as the raw country lad by whose means the plot is chiefly discovered, was as natural as he always is in such characters. He perhaps has got too much of a habit of expressing his joy by running up and down the stage with his arms spread out like a pair of wings. Mr. Powell, as the faithful old servant of the Anglade family, was highly respectable. One sentiment in the play, 'The woman who follows her husband to a prison, to share or to alleviate his misfortunes, is an ornament to her sex, and an honour to human nature,' was highly applauded—we do not know for what particular reason.[1]

[1] It was about this time that Madame Lavalette assisted her husband to escape from prison.

Covent-Garden.

The same drama has been abridged and brought out here as an After-piece. We cannot speak highly of the alteration. The sentimental French romance is cut down into an English farce, in which both the interest of the story and the *naiveté* of the characters are lost. The two characters of the Valet and the Italian stroller are confounded in the same person, and played by Mathews, who is death to the pathetic! Charles Kemble played the Count D'Anglade in a very gentlemanly manner. Farley was the most turbulent Valet we have ever seen.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE

The Examiner. *February* 11, 1816.

In the 'Lectures on Dramatic Literature by William Schlegel,' the German translator of Shakespear, is the following criticism on Measure for Measure, which has been just acted at Covent-Garden Theatre: 'In Measure for Measure, Shakespear was compelled, by the nature of the subject, to make his poetry more familiar with criminal justice than is usual with him. All kinds of proceedings connected with the subject, all sorts of active or passive persons, pass in review before us; the hypocritical Lord Deputy, the compassionate Provost, and the hard-hearted Hangman; a young man of quality who is to suffer for the seduction of his mistress before marriage, loose wretches brought in by the police, nay, even a hardened criminal whom the preparations for his execution cannot awake out of his callousness. But yet, notwithstanding this convincing truth, how tenderly and mildly the whole is treated! The piece takes improperly its name from the punishment: the sense of the whole is properly the triumph of mercy over strict justice, no man being himself so secure from errors as to be entitled to deal it out among his equals. The most beautiful ornament of the composition is the character of Isabella, who, in the intention of taking the veil, allows herself to be again prevailed on by pious love to tread the perplexing ways of the world, while the heavenly purity of her mind is not even stained with one unholy thought by the general corruption. In the humble robes of the novice of a nunnery, she is a true angel of light. When the cold and hitherto unsullied Angelo, whom the Duke has commissioned to restrain the excess of dissolute immorality by a rigid administration of the laws during his pretended absence, is even himself tempted by the virgin charms of Isabella, as she supplicates for

her brother Claudio; when he first insinuates, in timid and obscure language, but at last impudently declares his readiness to grant the life of Claudio for the sacrifice of her honour; when Isabella repulses him with a noble contempt; when she relates what has happened to her brother, and the latter at first applauds her, but at length, overpowered by the dread of death, wishes to persuade her to consent to her dishonour; in these masterly scenes Shakespear has sounded the depth of the human heart. The interest here reposes altogether on the action; curiosity constitutes no part of our delight; for the Duke, in the disguise of a monk, is always present to watch over his dangerous representatives, and to avert every evil which could possibly be apprehended: we look here with confidence to the solemn decision. The Duke acts the part of the Monk naturally, even to deception; he unites in his person the wisdom of the priest and the prince. His wisdom is merely too fond of roundabout ways; his vanity is flattered with acting invisibly like an earthly providence; he is more entertained with overhearing his subjects than governing them in the customary manner. As he at last extends pardon to all the guilty, we do not see how his original purpose of restoring the strictness of the laws by committing the execution of them to other hands, has been in any wise accomplished. The poet might have had this irony in view—that of the numberless slanders of the Duke, told him by the petulant Lucio, without knowing the person to whom he spoke, what regarded his singularities and whims was not wholly without foundation.

'It is deserving of remark, that Shakespear, amidst the rancour of religious parties, takes a delight in representing the condition of a monk, and always represents his influence as beneficial. We find in him none of the black and knavish monks, which an enthusiasm for the Protestant Religion, rather than poetical inspiration, has suggested to some of our modern poets. Shakespear merely gives his monks an inclination to busy themselves in the affairs of others, after renouncing the world for themselves; with respect, however, to privy frauds, he does not represent them as very conscientious. Such are the parts acted by the Monk in Romeo and Juliet, and another in Much ado about Nothing, and even by the Duke, whom, contrary to the well known proverb, "the cowl seems really to make a monk."' Vol. ii. p. 169.

This is, we confess, a very poor criticism on a very fine play; but we are not in the humour (even if we could) to write a better. A very obvious beauty, which has escaped the critic, is the admirable description of life, as poetical as it is metaphysical, beginning, 'If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing,' &c. to the truth and justice of which

Claudio assents, contrasted almost immediately afterwards with his fine description of death as the worst of ills:

> 'To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
> This sensible warm motion to become
> A kneaded clod, and the delighted spirit
> To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
> In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice.
> ———— 'Tis too horrible!
> The weariest and most loathed worldly life
> That age, ache, penury, imprisonment,
> Can lay on nature, is a paradise
> To what we fear of death.'—

Neither has he done justice to the character of Master Barnardine, one of the finest (and that 's saying a bold word) in all Shakespear. He calls him a hardened criminal. He is no such thing. He is what he is by nature, not by circumstance, 'careless, reckless, and fearless of past, present, and to come.' He is Caliban transported to the forests of Bohemia, or the prisons of Vienna. He has, however, a sense of the natural fitness of things: 'He has been drinking hard all night, and he will not be hanged that day,' and Shakespear has let him off at last. Emery does not play it well, for Master Barnardine is not the representative of a Yorkshireman, but of an universal class in nature. We cannot say that the Clown Pompey suffered in the hands of Mr. Liston; on the contrary, he played it inimitably well. His manner of saying 'a dish of some three-pence' was worth any thing. In the scene of his examination before the Justice, he delayed, and dallied, and dangled in his answers, in the true spirit of the genius of his author.

We do not understand why the philosophical critic, whom we have quoted above, should be so severe on those pleasant persons Lucio, Pompey, and Master Froth, as to call them 'wretches.' They seem all mighty comfortable in their occupations, and determined to pursue them, 'as the flesh and fortune should serve.' Shakespear was the least moral of all writers; for morality (commonly so called) is made up of antipathies, and his talent consisted in sympathy with human nature, in all its shapes, degrees, elevations, and depressions. The object of the pedantic moralist is to make the worst of every thing; *his* was to make the best, according to his own principle, 'There is some soul of goodness in things evil.' Even Master Barnardine is not left to the mercy of what others think of him, but when he comes in, he speaks for himself. We would recommend it to the Society for the Suppression of Vice to read Shakespear.

Mr. Young played the Duke tolerably well. As to the cant

introduced into Schlegel's account of the Duke's assumed character of a Monk, we scout it altogether. He takes advantage of the good-nature of the poet to impose on the credulity of mankind. Chaucer spoke of the Monks historically, Shakespear poetically. It was not in the nature of Shakespear to insult over 'the enemies of the human race' just after their fall. We however object to them entirely in this age of the revival of Inquisitions and Protestant massacres. We have not that stretch of philosophical comprehension which, in German metaphysics, unites popery and free-thinking together, loyalty and regicide, and which binds up the Bible and Spinoza in the same volume!—Mr. Jones did not make a bad Lucio. Miss O'Neill's Isabella, though full of merit, disappointed us; as indeed she has frequently done of late. Her 'Oh fie, fie,' was the most spirited thing in her performance. She did not seize with much force the spirit of her author, but she seemed in complete possession of a certain conventicle twang. She whined and sang out her part in that querulous tone that has become unpleasant to us by ceaseless repetition. She at present plays all her parts in the Magdalen style. We half begin to suspect that she represents the bodies, not the souls of women, and that her *forte* is in tears, sighs, sobs, shrieks, and hysterics. She does not play either Juliet or Isabella finely. She must stick to the common-place characters of Otway, Moore, and Miss Hannah More, or she will ruin herself. As Sir Joshua Reynolds concluded his last lecture with the name of Michael Angelo, as Vetus wished the name of the Marquis Wellesley to conclude his last letter, so we will conclude this article with a devout apostrophe to the name of Mrs. Siddons.

MR. KEAN'S SIR GILES OVERREACH

The Examiner. *February* 18, 1816.

We saw Mr. Kean's Sir Giles Overreach on Friday night from the boxes at Drury-Lane Theatre, and are not surprised at the incredulity as to this great actor's powers, entertained by those persons who have only seen him from that elevated sphere. We do not hesitate to say, that those who have only seen him at that distance, have not seen him at all. The expression of his face is quite lost, and only the harsh and grating tones of his voice produce their full effect on the ear. The same recurring sounds, by dint of repetition, fasten on the attention, while the varieties and finer modulations are lost in their passage over the pit. All you discover is an abstraction of his defects, both of person, voice, and manner. He appears to be a little man in a great passion. The accompaniment of expression is

absolutely necessary to explain his tones and gestures: and the outline which he gives of the character, in proportion as it is bold and decided, requires to be filled up and modified by all the details of execution. Without seeing the workings of his face, through which you read the movements of his soul, and anticipate their violent effects on his utterance and action, it is impossible to understand or feel pleasure in the part. All strong expression, deprived of its gradations and connecting motives, unavoidably degenerates into caricature. This was the effect uniformly produced on those about us, who kept exclaiming, 'How extravagant, how odd,' till the last scene, where the extreme and admirable contrasts both of voice and gesture in which Mr. Kean's genius shews itself, and which are in their nature more obviously intelligible, produced a change of opinion in his favour.

As a proof of what we have above advanced, it was not possible to discover in the last scene, where he is lifted from the ground by the attendants, and he rivets his eyes in dreadful despair upon his daughter, whether they were open or closed. The action of advancing to the middle of the stage, and his faultering accent in saying, 'Marall, come hither, Marall,' could not be mistaken. The applause, however, came almost constantly from those who were near the orchestra, and circulated in eddies round the house. It is unpleasant to see a play from the boxes. There is no part of the house which is so thoroughly wrapped up in itself, and fortified against any impression from what is passing on the stage; which seems so completely weaned from all superstitious belief in dramatic illusion; which takes so little interest in all that is interesting. Not a cravat nor a muscle was discomposed, except now and then by some gesticulation of Mr. Kean, which violated the decorum of fashionable indifference, or by some expression of the author, two hundred years old. Mr. Kean's acting is not, we understand, much relished in the upper circles. It is thought too obtrusive and undisguised a display of nature. Neither was Garrick's at all relished at first, by the old Nobility, till it became the fashion to admire him. The court dresses, the drawing-room strut, and the sing-song declamation, which he banished from the stage, were thought much more dignified and imposing.

THE RECRUITING OFFICER

The Examiner. *March 3, 1816.*

Farquhar's Comedy of the Recruiting Officer was revived at Drury-Lane Theatre on Tuesday, when Mrs. Mardyn appeared as Sylvia. She looked very charmingly in it while she continued in her female

dress, and displayed some good acting, particularly in the scene where Plume gives her his will to read; but we did not like her at all as Young Wilful, with her jockey coat, breeches, and boots. Her dress seemed as if contrived on purpose to hide the beauties of her natural shape, and discover its defects. A woman in Hessian boots can no more move gracefully under such an additional and unusual incumbrance to her figure, than a man could with a clog round each leg. We hope that she will re-cast her male attire altogether, if she has not already done it. The want of vivacity and elegance in her appearance gave a flatness to the latter part of the comedy, which was not relieved by the circumstance of Mr. Rae's forgetting his part. We do not think he played the airy, careless, lively Captain Plume well; and Mr. Harley did not play *Captain* Brazen, but *Serjeant* Brazen. Johnstone's Serjeant Kite was not very happy. Johnstone's impudence is good-humoured and natural, Serjeant Kite's is knavish impudence. Johnstone is not exactly fitted for any character, the failings of which do not lean to the amiable side. There was one speech which entirely suited him, and that was where he says to his Captain, 'The mob are so pleased with your Honour, and the justices and better sort of people are so delighted with me, that we shall soon do our business!' Munden's Costar Pearmain, and Knight's Thomas Appletree, were a double treat. Knight's fixed, rivetted look at the guinea, accompanied with the exclamation, 'Oh the wonderful works of Nature!' and Munden's open-mouthed, reeling wonder, were in the best style of broad comic acting. If any thing, this scene was even surpassed by that in which Munden, after he has listed with Plume, makes his approximations to his friend, who is whimpering, and casting at him a most inviting ogle, with an expression of countenance all over oily and lubricated, emphatically ejaculates, 'Well, Tummy!' We have no wish to see better acting than this. This actor has won upon our good opinion, and we here retract openly all that we have said disrespectfully of his talents, generally speaking. Miss Kelly's Rose was played *con amore;* it was an exquisite exhibition of rustic *naiveté*. Her riding on the basket as a side-saddle, was very spirited and well contrived. Passion expresses itself in such characters by a sort of uneasy bodily vivacity, which no actress gives so well as Miss Kelly. We ought not to omit, that she cries her chickens in a good shrill huswifely market-voice, as if she would drive a good bargain with them. Mr. Powell played Justice Balance as well as if he had been the Justice himself.

The Recruiting Officer is not one of Farquhar's best comedies, though it is lively and entertaining. It contains merely sketches of

characters, and the conclusion of the plot is rather lame. He informs us in the dedication to the published play, that it was founded on some local and personal circumstances that happened in Shropshire, where he was a recruiting officer, and it seems not unlikely that most of the scenes actually took place near the foot of the Wrekin.

THE FAIR PENITENT

The Examiner. *Covent-Garden* *March* 10, 1816.

The Fair Penitent is a tragedy which has been found fault with both on account of its poetry and its morality. Notwithstanding these objections, it still holds possession of the stage, where morality is not very eagerly sought after, and poetry but imperfectly understood. We conceive, that for every purpose of practical criticism, that is a good tragedy which draws tears without moving laughter. Rowe's play is founded on one of Massinger's, the Fatal Dowry, in which the characters are a good deal changed, and the interest not increased. The genius of Rowe was slow and timid, and loved the ground: he had not 'a Muse of fire to ascend the brightest heaven of invention:' but he had art and judgment enough to accommodate the more daring flights of a ruder age to the polished well-bred mediocrity of the age he lived in. We may say of Rowe as Voltaire said of Racine: 'All his lines are equally good.' The compliment is after all equivocal; but it is one which may be applied generally to all poets, who in their productions are always thinking of what they shall say, and of what others have said, and who are never hurried into excesses of any kind, good or bad, by trusting implicitly to the impulse of their own genius or of the subject. The excellent author of Tom Jones, in one of his introductory chapters, represents Rowe as an awkward imitator of Shakespear. He was rather an imitator of the style and tone of sentiment of that age,—a sort of modernizer of antiquity. The character of Calista is quite in the *bravura* style of Massinger. She is a heroine, a virago, fair, a woman of high spirit and violent resolutions, any thing but a penitent. She dies indeed at last, not from remorse for her vices, but because she can no longer gratify them. She has not the slightest regard for her virtue, and not much for her reputation; but she would brand with scorn, and blast with the lightning of her indignation, the friend who wishes to stop her in the career of her passions in order to save her from destruction and infamy. She has a strong sentiment of respect and attachment to her father, but she will sooner consign his grey hairs to shame and death

than give up the least of her inclinations, or sacrifice her sullen gloom to the common decencies of behaviour. She at last pretends conversion from her errors, in a soft whining address to her husband, and after having deliberately and wantonly done all the mischief in her power, with her eyes open, wishes that she had sooner known better, that she might have acted differently! We do not however for ourselves object to the morality of all this: for we apprehend that morality is little more than truth; and we think that Rowe has given a very true and striking picture of the nature and consequences of that wilful selfishness of disposition, 'which to be hated needs but to be seen.' We do not think it necessary that the spectator should wait for the reluctant conversion of the character itself, to be convinced of its odiousness or folly, or that the only instruction to be derived from the drama is, not from the insight it gives us into the nature of human character and passion, but from some artificial piece of patchwork morality tacked to the end. However, Rowe has so far complied with the rules.

After what we have said of the character of Calista, Miss O'Neill will perhaps excuse us if we do not think that she was a very perfect representative of it. The character, as she gave it, was a very fine and impressive piece of acting, but it was not quite Calista. She gave the pathos, but not the spirit of the character. Her grief was sullen and sad, not impatient and ungovernable. Calista's melancholy is not a settled dejection, but a feverish state of agitation between conflicting feelings. Her eyes should look bright and sparkling through her tears. Her action should be animated and aspiring. Her present woes should not efface the traces of past raptures. There should be something in her appearance of the intoxication of pleasure, mixed with the madness of despair. The scene in which Miss O'Neill displayed most power, was that in which she is shewn her letter to Lothario by Horatio, her husband's friend. The rage and shame with which her bosom seemed labouring were truly dreadful. This is the scene in which the poet has done most for the imagination, and it is the characteristic excellence of Miss O'Neill's acting, that it always rises with the expectations of the audience. She also repeated the evasive answer, 'It was the day in which my father gave my hand to Altamont—as such I shall remember it for ever,' in a tone of deep and suppressed emotion. It is needless to add, that she played the part with a degree of excellence which no other actress could approach, and that she was only inferior to herself in it, because there is not the same opportunity for the display of her inimitable powers, as in some of her other characters.

A VIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE

THE DUKE OF MILAN

The Examiner. *March* 17, 1816.

We do not think the Duke of Milan will become so great a favourite as Sir Giles Overreach, at Drury-Lane Theatre. The first objection to this play is, that it is an arbitrary falsification of history. There is nothing in the life of Sforza, the supposed hero of the piece, to warrant the account of the extravagant actions and tragical end which are here attributed to him, to say nothing of political events. In the second place, his resolution to destroy his wife, to whom he is passionately attached, rather than bear the thought of her surviving him, is as much out of the verge of nature and probability, as it is unexpected and revolting from the want of any circumstances of palliation leading to it. It stands out alone, a piece of pure voluntary atrocity, which seems not the dictate of passion but a start of phrenzy. From the first abrupt mention of this design to his treacherous accomplice, Francesco, he loses the favour, and no longer excites the sympathy of the audience. Again, Francesco is a person whose actions we are at a loss to explain, till the last act of the piece, when the attempt to account for them from motives originally amiable and generous, only produces a double sense of incongruity, and instead of satisfying the mind, renders it totally incredulous. He endeavours to debauch the wife of his benefactor, he then attempts her death, slanders her foully, and wantonly causes her to be slain by the hand of her husband, and has him poisoned by a deliberate stratagem; and all this to appease a high sense of injured honour, 'which felt a stain like a wound,' and from the tender overflowings of fraternal affection; his sister having, it appears, been formerly betrothed to, and afterwards deserted by the Duke.

In the original play, the Duke is killed by a poison which is spread by Francesco over the face of the deceased Duchess, whose lips her husband fondly kisses, though cold in death, in the distracted state into which he is plunged by remorse for his rash act. But in the acted play, it is so contrived, that the sister of Francesco personates the murdered Duchess, and poisons the Duke (as it is concerted with her brother), by holding a flower in her hand, which, as he squeezes it, communicates the infection it has received from some juice in which it has been steeped. How he is to press the flower in her hand, in such a manner as not to poison her as well as himself, is left unexplained. The lady, however, does not die, and a reconciliation takes place between her and her former lover.

We hate these sickly sentimental endings, without any meaning in them.

The peculiarity of Massinger's vicious characters seems in general to be, that they are totally void of moral sense, and have a gloating pride and disinterested pleasure in their villanies, unchecked by the common feelings of humanity. Francesco, in the present play, holds it out to the last, defies his enemies, and is 'proud to die what he was born.' At other times, after the poet has carried on one o these hardened unprincipled characters for a whole play, he is seized with a sudden qualm of conscience, and his villain is visited with a judicial remorse. This is the case with Sir Giles Overreach, whose hand is restrained in the last extremity of his rage by 'some widow's curse that hangs upon it,' and whose heart is miraculously melted 'by orphan's tears.' We will not, however, deny that such may be a true picture of the mixed barbarity and superstition of the age in which Massinger wrote. We have no doubt that his Sir Giles Overreach, which some have thought an incredible exaggeration, was an actual portrait. Traces of such characters are still to be found in some parts of the country, and in classes to which modern refinement and modern education have not penetrated;—characters that not only make their own selfishness and violence the sole rule of their actions, but triumph in the superiority which their want of feeling and of principle gives them over their opponents or dependants. In the time of Massinger, philosophy had made no progress in the minds of country gentlemen: nor had the theory of moral sentiments, in the community at large, been fashioned and moulded into shape by systems of ethics continually pouring in upon us from the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen. Persons in the situation, and with the dispositions of Sir Giles, cared not what wrong they did, nor what was thought of it, if they had only the power to maintain it. There is no calculating the advantages of civilization and letters, in taking off the hard, coarse edge of rusticity, and in softening social life. The vices of refined and cultivated periods are *personal* vices, such as proceed from too unrestrained a pursuit of pleasure in ourselves, not from a desire to inflict pain on others.

Mr. Kean's Sforza is not his most striking character; on the contrary, it is one of his least impressive, and least successful ones. The mad scene was fine, but we have seen him do better. The character is too much at cross-purposes with itself, and before the actor has time to give its full effect to any impulse of passion, it is interrupted and broken off by some caprice or change of object. In Mr. Kean's representation of it, our expectations were often excited, but never thoroughly satisfied, and we were teased with a sense of

littleness in every part of it. It entirely wants the breadth, force, and grandeur of his Sir Giles.

One of the scenes, a view of the court-house at Milan, was most beautiful. Indeed, the splendour of the scenery and dresses frequently took away from the effect of Mr. Kean's countenance.

MISS O'NEILL'S LADY TEAZLE

The Examiner. *March* 24, 1816.

Miss O'Neill's Lady Teazle at Covent-Garden Theatre appears to us to be a complete failure. It was not comic; it was not elegant; it was not easy; it was not dignified; it was not playful; it was not any thing that it ought to be. All that can be said of it is, that it was not tragedy. It seemed as if all the force and pathos which she displays in interesting situations had left her, but that not one spark of gaiety, one genuine expression of delight, had come in their stead. It was a piece of laboured heavy *still-life*. The only thing that had an air of fashion about her was the feather in her hat. It was not merely that she did not succeed as Miss O'Neill; it would have been a falling off in the most common-place actress who had ever done any thing tolerably. She gave to the character neither the complete finished air of fashionable indifference, which was the way in which Miss Farren played it, if we remember right, nor that mixture of artificial refinement and natural vivacity, which appears to be the true idea of the character (which however is not very well made out), but she seemed to have been thrust by some injudicious caprice of fortune, into a situation for which she was fitted neither by nature nor education. There was a perpetual affectation of the wit and the fine lady, with an evident consciousness of effort, a desire to please without any sense of pleasure. It was no better than awkward mimicry of the part, and more like a drawling imitation of Mrs. C. Kemble's genteel comedy than any thing else we have seen. The concluding penitential speech was an absolute sermon. We neither liked her manner of repeating 'Mimminee pimminee,' nor of describing the lady who rides round the ring in Hyde-park, nor of chucking Sir Peter under the chin, which was a great deal too coarse and familiar. There was throughout an equal want of delicacy and spirit, of ease and effect, of nature and art. It was in general flat and insipid, and where any thing more was attempted, it was overcharged and unpleasant.

Fawcett's Sir Peter Teazle was better than when we last saw it. He is an actor of much merit, but he has of late got into a strange

way of slurring over his parts. Liston's Sir Benjamin Backbite was not very successful. Charles Kemble played Charles Surface very delightfully.

Guy Mannering, or the Gipsey's Prophecy, taken from the novel of that name, and brought out at Covent-Garden, is a very pleasing romantic drama. It is, we understand, from the pen of Mr. Terry, and reflects much credit on his taste and talents. The scenes between Miss Stephens, Miss Matthews, and Mr. Abbott, as Lucy Bertram, Julia Mannering, and Colonel Mannering, have a high degree of elegance and interest. Mrs. Egerton's Meg Merrilees was equal in force and nature to her Miller's Wife; and we cannot pay it a higher compliment. It makes the blood run cold. Mr. Higman played the chief Gipsey very well, and nothing could be better represented than the unfeeling, shuffling tricks and knavish impudence of the Gipsey Boy, by Master Williams. Liston's Dominie Sampson was *prodigious*; his talents are *prodigious*. The appearance and the interest he gave to the part were quite patriarchal. The unconscious simplicity of the humour was exquisite; it will give us a better opinion of the Scotch Clergy, and almost of the Scotch nation (if that were possible) while we live.

MR. KEAN

The Examiner. *March* 31, 1816.

A chasm has been produced in the amusements of Drury-Lane Theatre by the accident which has happened to Mr. Kean. He was to have played the Duke of Milan on Tuesday, but as he had not come to the Theatre at the time of the drawing up of the curtain, Mr. Rae came forward to propose another tragedy, Douglas. To this the audience did not assent, and wished to wait. Mr. Kean, however, not appearing, nor any tidings being heard of him, he was at length given up, and two farces substituted in his stead. Conjectures and rumours were afloat; and it was not till the next day that it was discovered that Mr. Kean having dined a few miles in the country, and returning at a very quick pace to keep his engagement at the Theatre, was thrown out of his gig, and had his arm dislocated, besides being stunned and very much bruised with the fall. On this accident a grave morning paper is pleased to be facetious. It observes that this is a very *serious* accident; that actors in general are liable to *serious* accidents; that the late Mr. Cooke used to meet with *serious* accidents; that it is a sad thing to

be in the way of such accidents; and that it is to be hoped that Mr. Kean will meet with no more *serious* accidents. It is to be hoped that he will not—nor with any such profound observations upon them, if they should happen. Next to that spirit of bigotry which in a neighbouring country would deny actors christian burial after death, we hate that cant of criticism, which slurs over their characters while living with a half-witted jest. Actors are accused as a profession of being extravagant and intemperate. While they are said to be so as a piece of common cant, they are likely to continue so. But there is a sentence in Shakespear which should be stuck as a label in the mouths of the beadles and whippers-in of morality: 'The web of our life is of a mingled yarn: our virtues would be proud if our vices whipped them not, and our faults would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues.'

With respect to the extravagance of actors, as a traditional character, it is not to be wondered at: they live from hand to mouth; they plunge from want into luxury; they have no means of making money *breed*, and all professions that do not live by turning money into money, or have not a certainty of accumulating it in the end by parsimony, spend it. Uncertain of the future, they make sure of the present moment. This is not unwise. Chilled with poverty, steeped in contempt, they sometimes pass into the sunshine of fortune, and are lifted to the very pinnacle of public favour, yet even there cannot calculate on the continuance of success, but are, 'like the giddy sailor on the mast, ready with every blast to topple down into the fatal bowels of the deep!' Besides, if the young enthusiast who is smitten with the stage, and with the public as a mistress, were naturally a close *hunks*, he would become or remain a city clerk, instead of turning player. Again, with respect to the habit of convivial indulgence, an actor, to be a good one, must have a great spirit of enjoyment in himself, strong impulses, strong passions, and a strong sense of pleasure, for it is his business to imitate the passions and to communicate pleasure to others. A man of genius is not a machine. The neglected actor may be excused if he drinks oblivion of his disappointments; the successful one, if he quaffs the applause of the world, and enjoys the friendship of those who are the friends of the favourites of fortune, in draughts of nectar. There is no path so steep as that of fame; no labour so hard as the pursuit of excellence. The intellectual excitement inseparable from those professions which call forth all our sensibility to pleasure and pain, requires some corresponding physical excitement to support our failure, and not a little to allay the ferment of the spirits attendant on success. If there is any tendency to dissipation beyond this in

the profession of a player, it is owing to the state of public opinion, which paragraphs like the one we have alluded to are not calculated to reform; and players are only not so *respectable* as a profession as they might be, because their profession is not *respected* as it ought to be.

There is something, we fear, impertinent and uncalled for in these remarks: the more so, as in the present instance the insinuation which they were meant to repel is wholly unfounded. We have it on very good authority, that Mr. Kean, since his engagement at Drury-Lane, and during his arduous and uninterrupted exertions in his profession, has never missed a single rehearsal, nor been absent a minute beyond the time for beginning his part.

MR. KEAN'S SHYLOCK

The Examiner. *April* 7, 1816.

Mr. Kean's friends felt some unnecessary anxiety with respect to his reception in the part of Shylock, on Monday night at Drury-Lane, being his first appearance after his recovery from his accident, which we are glad to find has not been a very serious one. On his coming on the stage there was a loud burst of applause and welcome; but as this was mixed with some hisses, Mr. Kean came forward, and spoke nearly as follows:

'Ladies and Gentlemen, for the first time in my life I have been the unfortunate cause of disappointing the public amusement.

'That it is the only time, on these boards, I can appeal to your own recollection; and when you take into calculation the 265 times that I have had the honour to appear before you, according to the testimony of the Manager's books, you will, perhaps, be able to make some allowance.

'To your favour I owe all the reputation I enjoy.

'I rely on your candour, that prejudice shall not rob me of what your kindness has conferred upon me.'

This address was received with cordial cheers, and the play went forward without interruption. As soon as the curtain drew up, some persons had absurdly called out 'Kean, Kean,' though Shylock does not appear in the first scenes. This was construed into a call for 'God save the *King*:' and the Duke of Gloucester's being in one of the stage-boxes seemed to account for this sudden effusion of loyalty,—a sentiment indeed always natural in the hearts of Englishmen, but at present not very noisy, and rather 'deep than loud.' For our own parts, we love the King according to law, but we cannot sing.

Shylock was the part in which Mr. Kean first sought the favour

of the town, and in which perhaps he chose for that reason to be reconciled to it, after the first slight misunderstanding. We were a little curious on this occasion to see the progress he has made in public opinion since that time; and on turning to our theatrical common-place book (there is nothing like a common-place book after all) found the following account of his first reception, copied from the most respectable of the Morning Papers: 'Mr. Kean (of whom report has spoken so highly) made his appearance at Drury-Lane in the character of Shylock. For *voice*, eye, action, and expression, no actor has come out for many years at all equal to him. The applause, from the first scene to the last, was general, loud, and uninterrupted. Indeed, the very first scene in which he comes on with Bassanio and Anthonio, shewed the master in his art, and at once decided the opinion of the audience. Perhaps it was the most perfect of any. Notwithstanding the complete success of Mr. Kean in Shylock, we question whether he will not become a greater favourite in other parts. There was a lightness and vigour in his tread, a buoyancy and elasticity of spirit, a fire and animation, which would accord better with almost any other character than with the morose, sullen, inward, inveterate, inflexible, malignity of Shylock. The character of Shylock is that of a man brooding over one idea, that of its wrongs, and bent on an unalterable purpose, that of revenge. In conveying a profound impression of this feeling, or in embodying the general conception of rigid and uncontroulable self-will, equally proof against every sentiment of humanity or prejudice of opinion, we have seen actors more successful than Mr. Kean. But in giving effect to the conflict of passions arising out of the contrast of situation, in varied vehemence of declamation, in keenness of sarcasm, in the rapidity of his transitions from one tone or feeling to another, in propriety and novelty of action, presenting a succession of striking pictures, and giving perpetually fresh shocks of delight and surprise, it would be difficult to single out a competitor. The fault of his acting was (if we may hazard an objection), an over-display of the resources of the art, which gave too much relief to the hard, impenetrable, dark ground-work of the character of Shylock. It would be needless to point out individual beauties, where almost every passage was received with equal and deserved applause. His style of acting is, if we may use the expression, more significant, more pregnant with meaning, more varied and alive in every part, than any we have almost ever witnessed. The character never stands still; there is no vacant pause in the action: the eye is never silent. It is not saying too much of Mr. Kean, though it is saying a great deal, that he has all that Mr. Kemble *wants* of perfection.'

The accounts in the other papers were not to be sure so favourable; and in the above criticism there are several errors. His voice, which is here praised, is very bad, though it must be confessed its defects appear less in Shylock than in most of his other characters. The critic appears also to have formed an overstrained idea of the gloomy character of Shylock, probably more from seeing other players perform it than from the text of Shakespear. Mr. Kean's manner is much nearer the mark. Shakespear could not easily divest his characters of their entire humanity: his Jew is more than half a Christian. Certainly, our sympathies are much oftener with him than with his enemies. He is honest in his vices; they are hypocrites in their virtues. In all his arguments and replies he has the advantage over them, by taking them on their own ground. Shylock (however some persons may suppose him bowed down by age, or deformed with malignity) never, that we can find, loses his elasticity and presence of mind. There is wonderful grace and ease in all the speeches in this play. 'I would not have parted with it (the jewel that he gave to Leah) for a *wilderness* of monkeys!' What a fine Hebraism! The character of Shylock is another instance of Shakespear's powers of identifying himself with the thoughts of men, their prejudices, and almost instincts.

THE ORATORIOS

The Examiner. *April* 14, 1816.

The Oratorios are over, and we are not sorry for it. Not that we are not fond of music; on the contrary, there is nothing that affects us so much; but the note it sounds is of too high a sphere. It lifts the soul to heaven, but in so doing, it exhausts the faculties, draws off the ethereal and refined part of them, and we fall back to the earth more dull and lumpish than ever. Music is the breath of thought; the audible movement of the heart. It is, for the most part, a pure effusion of sentiment; the language of pleasure, abstracted from its exciting causes. But the human mind is so formed, that it cannot easily bear, for any length of time, an uninterrupted appeal to the sense of pleasure alone; we require the relief of objects and ideas; it may be said that the activity of the soul, of the voluptuous part of our nature, cannot keep pace with that of the understanding, which only discerns the outward differences of things. All passion exhausts the mind; and that kind of passion most, which presents no distinct object to the imagination. The eye may amuse itself for a whole day with the variety to be found in a florist's garden; but the

sense is soon cloyed with the smell of the sweetest flowers, and we throw them from us as if they had been weeds. The sounds of music are like perfumes, 'exhaling to the sky;' too sweet to last; that must be borne to us on the passing breeze, not pressed and held close to the sense; the warbling of heavenly voices in the air, not the ordinary language of men. If music is (as it is said to be) the language of angels, poetry is the most perfect language men can use: for poetry is music also, and has as much of the soft and voluptuous in its nature, as the hard and unyielding materials of our composition will bear. Music is colour without form; a soul without a body; a mistress whose face is veiled; an invisible goddess.

The Oratorios at Covent-Garden are in general much better than those at Drury-Lane: this year they have had Braham, Miss Stephens, Madam Marconi, and, if that were any great addition, Madame Mainville Fodor. Of this last lady it may be said, that she 'has her exits and her entrances,' and that is nearly all you know of her. She was encored in one song, 'Ah pardonna,' to her evident chagrin. Her airs of one kind scarcely make amends for her airs of another. Her voice is clear and forcible, and has a kind of deep internal volume, which seems to be artificially suppressed. Her hard, firm style of execution (something like the dragging of the painter's pencil) gives a greater relief to the occasional sweetness and power of tone which she displays. Her taste in singing is severe and fastidious; and this is, we suppose, the reason that a connoisseur of great eminence compared it to Titian's colouring. Madam Marconi, on the contrary, has a broad and full manner; sings with all her might, and pours out her whole soul and voice. There is something masculine, and we might say, rather vulgar, in her tones, if her native Italian or broken English did not prevent such a suggestion almost before it rises in the mind. Miss Stephens sang with more than her usual spirit, and was much applauded, particularly in 'The mower wets his scythe,' &c.; but we do not think her *forte* is in concert-music. Mr. Braham's certainly is; and his power is thrown away on the ballad airs which he sings in general on the stage. The sweetness of his voice becomes languishing and effeminate, unless where it is sustained by its depth and power. But on these occasions there is a rich mellifluous tone in his cadences, which is like that of bees swarming; his chest is dilated; he heaves the loud torrent of sound, like a load, from his heart; his voice rises in thunder, and his whole frame is inspired with the god! He sung Luther's Hymn very finely, with the exception of one quavering falsetto. This appears to our ignorant fancies at once the simplest and sublimest of compositions. The whole expresses merely the alternations of

respiration, the heaving or drawing in of the breath, with the rising or sinking of hope or fear. It is music to which the dead might awake! On the last night of the Covent-Garden Oratorio, the beginning of Haydn's Creation was played. It is the accompaniment to the words, 'And God said let there be light,' &c. The adaptation of sound to express certain ideas, is most ingenious and admirable. The rising of the sun is described by a crashing and startling movement of sounds in all directions, like the effulgence of its rays sparkling through the sky; and the moon is made to rise to a slow and subdued symphony, like sound muffled, or like the moon emerging from a veil of mist, according to that description in Milton,—

> 'Till the moon
> Rising in clouded majesty, at length
> Apparent queen unveiled her peerless light,
> And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.'

The stars also are represented twinkling in the blue abyss, by intervals of sweet sounds just audible. The art, however, by which this is done, is perhaps too little natural to please.

Mons. Drouet's performance on the flute was masterly, as far as we could judge. The execution of his variations on 'God save the King,' astonished and delighted the connoisseurs. Those on 'Hope told a flattering tale,' were also exquisite. We are, however, deep-versed in the sentiment of this last air; and we lost it in the light and fantastic movements of Mons. Drouet's execution. He belongs, we apprehend, to that class of musicians, whose ears are at their fingers' ends; but he is perhaps at the head. We profess, however, to be very ignorant in these matters, and speak under correction.

RICHARD III.

The Examiner. *April* 21, 1816.

The Managers of Covent-Garden Theatre have treated the public with two new Richards this season, Mr. Edwards, and Mr. Cobham. The first, his own good sense and modesty induced to withdraw, after the disapprobation of the public had been expressed on his first trial. Mr. Cobham, who is not 'made of penetrable stuff,' intends, we understand, to face the public out in the character. This is an experiment which will never answer. We shall take good care, however, not to be present at the fray. We do not blame Mr.

Cobham for the mortification and disappointment which we have received, but the Managers. Self-knowledge is a rare acquisition; but criticism upon others is a very easy task; and the Managers need merely have perceived as much of the matter as was obvious to every common spectator from the first moment of this actor's coming on, to know that it was quite impossible he should get through the part with ordinary decency. The only scene that was tolerable was the meeting with Lady Anne. But for his Richard—(Heaven save the mark)—it was a vile one—'unhousell'd, unanointed, unaneal'd, with all his imperfections on his head.' Not that this actor is without the physical requisites to play Richard: he raved, whined, grinned, stared, stamped, and rolled his eyes with incredible velocity, and all in the right place according to his cue, but in so extravagant and disjointed a manner, and with such a total want of common sense, decorum, or conception of the character, as to be perfectly ridiculous. We suspect that he has a wrong theory of his art. He has taken a lesson from Mr. Kean, whom he caricatures, and seems to suppose that to be familiar or violent is natural, and that to be natural is the perfection of acting. And so it is, if properly understood. But to play Richard naturally, is to play it as Richard would play it, not as Mr. Cobham would play it; he comes there to shew us not himself, but the tyrant and the king—not what he would do, but what another would do in such circumstances. Before he can do this he must become that other, and cease to be himself. Dignity is natural to certain stations, and grandeur of expression to certain feelings. In art, nature cannot exist without the highest art; it is a pure effort of the imagination, which throws the mind out of itself into the supposed situation of others, and enables it to feel and act there as if it were at home. The real Richard and the real Mr. Cobham are quite different things.

But we are glad to have done with this subject, and proceed to a more grateful one, which is to notice the Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant of a Gentleman whose name has not yet been announced.[1] We have no hesitation in pronouncing him an acquisition to this Theatre. To compare him with Cooke in this character would be idle; for it was Cooke's very best character, and Cooke was one of the very best actors we have had on the stage. But he played the character throughout without a single failure, and with great judgment, great spirit, and great effect. In the scenes with Egerton, where he gives a loose to his natural feelings, he expressed all the turbulence and

[1] A Mr. Bibby, from the United States.

irritation of his mind without losing sight of his habitual character or external demeanour. He has a great deal of that assumed decorum and imposing stateliness of manner, which, since the days of Jack Palmer, has been a desideratum on the stage. In short, we have had no one who looked at home in a full dress coat and breeches. Besides the more obvious requisites for the stage, the bye-play of the new actor is often excellent: his eye points what he is going to say; he has a very significant smile, and a very alarming shrug with his shoulders. The only objection that we have to make is to the too frequent repetition of a certain motion with the hands which may easily be avoided.

During a part of the representation there was some opposition most absurdly manifested: partly from its being Easter week, partly from persons who did not understand Scotch, and still more, we apprehend, from those who did. Sir Pertinax has always been an obnoxious *up-hill* character, and hazardous to a debutant. We see no reason for this on a London stage. The Irish say, that we laugh at them on the stage: why then should we not laugh at the Scotch? The answer is—that we laugh at the Irish, to be sure, but we do not make them odious.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

The Examiner. *April* 28, 1816.

Romeo and Juliet was played at Drury-Lane to introduce a new candidate for public favour, Miss Grimani, as Juliet, and to show off a very old one, Mr. Rae as Romeo. This lady has one qualification for playing the part of Juliet which is, that she is very pretty; but we are afraid that 's all. Her voice in common speaking is thin and lisping, and when she raises it, it becomes harsh and unmanageable, as if she had learned to speak of ———. We cannot however pretend to say how far her timidity might interfere with the display of her powers. Mr. Rae cannot plead the same excuse of modesty for the faults of his acting. Between the tragi-comedy of his voice and the drollery of his action, we were exceedingly amused. His manner of saying, 'How silver sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,' was more like 'the midnight bell that with his iron tongue and brazen mouth sounds one unto the drowsy race of night;' and his hurried mode of getting over the description of the Apothecary, was as if a person should be hired to repeat this speech after ten miles hard riding on a high trotting horse. When this 'gentle tassel' is lured back in the garden by his Juliet's voice, he returns at full speed, like

a harlequin going to take a flying leap through a trap-door. This was, we suppose, to give us an allegorical idea of his being borne on the wings of love, but we could discover neither his wings nor his love. The rest of the play was very indifferently got up, except the Nurse by Mrs. Sparks.

After the play, we had Garrick's Ode on Shakespear, and a procession of Shakespear's characters in dumb-show. Mr. Pope recited the Ode, and personated the Genius of Shakespear as the Wool-sack personates the Prince Regent. 'Vesuvius in an eruption, was not more violent than his utterance, not Pelion with all his pine-trees in a storm of wind more impetuous than his action: and yet Drury-Lane still stands.' We have here used the words of Gray, in describing a University Orator at a Cambridge Installation. The result, as given by the poet, was more agreeable than in the present instance.—'I was ready to sink for him, and scarce dared look about me, when I was sure it was all over: but soon I found I might have spared my confusion: all people joined to applaud him. Every thing was quite right, and I dare swear not three people here but think him a model of oratory: for all the Duke's little court came with a resolution to be pleased: and when the tone was once given, the University, who ever wait for the judgment of their betters, struck into it with an admirable harmony; for the rest of the performances, they were just what they usually are. Every one, while it lasted, was very gay and very busy in the morning, and very owlish and very tipsy at night: I make no exceptions from the Chancellor to Blue-coat.'

Mr. Pope did not get off so well as the Cambridge Orator, for Garrick's Ode 'was sung, but broke off in the middle' by the shouts and laughter of the audience, less well-bred than the grave assembly above described: nor was any one in the situation of the Chancellor or Blue-coat. We are free to confess, that we think the recitation of an Ode requires the assistance of good eating and drinking to carry it off; and this is perhaps the reason that there is such good eating and drinking at our Universities, where the reciting of Odes and other formal productions is common.

After the Ode, the Mulberry Tree was sung by Mr. Pyne and Mr. Smith, not in the garden, but in the street, before the house where Shakespear was born. This violation of the unity of place confounded the sentiment, nor was the uncertainty cleared up by a rabble of attendants, (more unintelligible than the Chorus of the ancients), who resembled neither waiters with tavern bills in their hands, nor musicians with their scores.

The singing being over, the procession of Characters commenced,

and we were afraid would have ended fatally; for Mrs. Bartley, as the Tragic Muse, was nearly upset by the breaking down of her car. We cannot go through the detail of this wretched burlesque. Mr. Stothard's late picture of the Characters of Shakespear was ingenious and satisfactory, because the figures seen together made picturesque groups, because painting presents but one moment of action, and because it is necessarily in dumb show. But this exhibition seemed intended as a travestie, to take off all the charm and the effect of the ideas associated with the several characters. It has satisfied us of the reality of dramatic illusion, by shewing the effect of such an exhibition entirely stripped of it. For example, Juliet is wheeled on in her tomb, which is broken open by her lover: she awakes, the tomb then moves forward, and Mr. S. Penley, not knowing what to do, throws himself upon the bier, and is wheeled off with her. Pope and Barnard come on as Lear and Mad Tom. They sit down on the ground, and Pope steals a crown of straw from his companion: Mad Tom then starts up, runs off the stage, and Pope after him, like Pantaloon in pursuit of the Clown. This is fulsome. We did not stay to see it out; and one consolation is, that we shall not be alive another century to see it repeated.

MR. KEMBLE'S SIR GILES OVERREACH

The Examiner. *May* 5, 1816.

Why they put Mr. Kemble into the part of Sir Giles Overreach, at Covent-Garden Theatre, we cannot conceive: we should suppose he would not put himself there. Malvolio, though cross-gartered, did not set himself in the stocks. No doubt, it is the Managers' doing, who by rope-dancing, fire-works, play-bill puffs, and by every kind of quackery, seem determined to fill their pockets for the present, and disgust the public in the end, if the public were an animal capable of being disgusted by quackery. But

> 'Doubtless the pleasure is as great
> In being cheated as to cheat.'

We do not know why we promised last week to give some account of Mr. Kemble's Sir Giles, except that we dreaded the task then; and certainly our reluctance to speak on this subject has not decreased, the more we have thought upon it since. We have hardly ever experienced a more painful feeling than when, after the close of the play, the sanguine plaudits of Mr. Kemble's friends, and the circular discharge of hisses from the back of the pit, that came 'full volly

home,'—the music struck up, the ropes were fixed, and Madame Sachi ran up from the stage to the two-shilling gallery, and then ran down again, as fast as her legs could carry her, amidst the shouts of pit, boxes, and gallery!

> 'So fails, so languishes, and dies away
> All that this world is proud of. So
> Perish the roses and the crowns of kings,
> Sceptres and palms of all the mighty.'

We have here marred some fine lines of Mr. Wordsworth on the instability of human greatness, but it is no matter: for he does not seem to understand the sentiment himself. Mr. Kemble, then, having been thrust into the part, as we suppose, against his will, run the gauntlet of public opinion in it with a firmness and resignation worthy of a Confessor. He did not once shrink from his duty, nor make one effort to redeem his reputation, by 'affecting a virtue when he knew he had it not.' He seemed throughout to say to his instigators, *You have thrust me into this part, help me out of it, if you can; for you see I cannot help myself.* We never saw signs of greater poverty, greater imbecility and decrepitude in Mr. Kemble, or in any other actor: it was Sir Giles in his dotage. It was all 'Well, well,' and, 'If you like it, have it so,' an indifference and disdain of what was to happen, a nicety about his means, a coldness as to his ends, much gentility and little nature. Was this Sir Giles Overreach? Nothing could be more quaint and out-of-the-way. Mr. Kemble wanted the part to come to him, for he would not go out of his way to the part. He is, in fact, as shy of committing himself with nature, as a maid is of committing herself with a lover. All the proper forms and ceremonies must be complied with, before 'they two can be made one flesh.' Mr Kemble sacrifices too much to decorum. He is chiefly afraid of being contaminated by too close an identity with the characters he represents. This is the greatest vice in an actor, who ought never to *bilk* his part. He endeavours to raise Nature to the dignity of his own person and demeanour, and declines with a graceful smile and a waive of the hand, the ordinary services she might do him. We would advise him by all means to shake hands, to hug her close, and be friends, if we did not suspect it was too late—that the lady, owing to this coyness, has eloped, and is now in the situation of Dame Hellenore among the Satyrs.

The outrageousness of the conduct of Sir Giles is only to be excused by the violence of his passions, and the turbulence of his character. Mr. Kemble inverted this conception, and attempted to reconcile the character, by softening down the action. He 'aggravated

the part so, that he would seem like any sucking dove.' For example, nothing could exceed the coolness and *sang-froid* with which he raps Marall on the head with his cane, or spits at Lord Lovell: Lord Foppington himself never did any common-place indecency more insipidly. The only passage that pleased us, or that really called forth the powers of the actor, was his reproach to Mr. Justice Greedy: 'There is some fury in that *Gut.*' The indignity of the word called up all the dignity of the actor to meet it, and he guaranteed the word, though 'a word of naught,' according to the letter and spirit of the convention between them, with a good grace, in the true old English way. Either we mistake all Mr. Kemble's excellences, or they all disqualify him for this part. Sir Giles *hath a devil*; Mr. Kemble has none. Sir Giles is in a passion; Mr. Kemble is not. Sir Giles has no regard to appearances; Mr. Kemble has. It has been said of the Venus de Medicis, 'So stands the statue that enchants the world;' the same might have been said of Mr. Kemble. He is the very still-life and statuary of the stage; a perfect figure of a man; a petrifaction of sentiment, that heaves no sigh, and sheds no tear; an icicle upon the bust of Tragedy. With all his faults, he has powers and faculties which no one else on the stage has; why then does he not avail himself of them, instead of throwing himself upon the charity of criticism? Mr. Kemble has given the public great, incalculable pleasure; and does he know so little of the gratitude of the world as to trust to their generosity?

BERTRAM

The Examiner. *May* 19, 1816.

The new tragedy of Bertram at Drury-Lane Theatre has entirely succeeded, and it has sufficient merit to deserve the success it has met with. We had read it before we saw it, and it on the whole disappointed us in the representation. Its beauties are rather those of language and sentiment than of action or situation. The interest flags very much during the last act, where the whole plot is known and inevitable. What it has of stage-effect is scenic and extraneous, as the view of the sea in a storm, the chorus of knights, &c. instead of arising out of the business of the play. We also object to the trick of introducing the little child twice to untie the knot of the catastrophe. One of these fantoccini exhibitions in the course of a tragedy is quite enough.

The general fault of this tragedy, and of other modern tragedies that we could mention, is, that it is a tragedy without business.

Aristotle, we believe, defines tragedy to be the representation of *a serious action.* Now here there is no action: there is neither cause nor effect. There is a want of that necessary connection between what happens, what is said, and what is done, in which we take the essence of dramatic invention to consist. It is a sentimental drama, it is a romantic drama, but it is not a tragedy, in the best sense of the word. That is to say, the passion described does not arise naturally out of the previous circumstances, nor lead necessarily to the consequences that follow. Mere sentiment is voluntary, fantastic, self-created, beginning and ending in itself; true passion is natural, irresistible, produced by powerful causes, and impelling the will to determinate actions. The old tragedy, if we understand it, is a display of the affections of the heart and the energies of the will; the modern romantic tragedy is a mixture of fanciful exaggeration and indolent sensibility; the former is founded on real calamities and real purposes: the latter courts distress, affects horror, indulges in all the luxury of woe, and nurses its languid thoughts, and dainty sympathies, to fill up the void of action. As the opera is filled with a sort of singing people, who translate every thing into music, the modern drama is filled with poets and their mistresses, who translate every thing into metaphor and sentiment. Bertram falls under this censure. It is a Winter's Tale, a Midsummer Night's Dream, but it is not Lear or Macbeth. The poet does not describe what his characters would feel in given circumstances, but lends them his own thoughts and feelings out of his general reflections on human nature, or general observation of certain objects. In a word, we hold for a truth, that a thoroughly good tragedy is an impossibility in a state of manners and literature where the poet and philosopher have got the better of the man; where the reality does not mould the imagination, but the imagination glosses over the reality; and where the unexpected stroke of true calamity, the biting edge of true passion, is blunted, sheathed, and lost, amidst the flowers of poetry strewed over unreal, unfelt distress, and the flimsy topics of artificial humanity prepared beforehand for all occasions. We are tired of this long-spun analysis; take an example:

'SCENE V.

A Gothic Apartment.

Imogine discovered sitting at a Table looking at a Picture.

Imogine. Yes,
The limner's art may trace the absent feature,
And give the eye of distant weeping faith
To view the form of its idolatry:

But oh! the scenes 'mid which they met and parted—
The thoughts, the recollections sweet and bitter—
Th' Elysian dreams of lovers, when they loved—
Who shall restore them?
Less lovely are the fugitive clouds of eve,
And not more vanishing—if thou couldst speak,
Dumb witness of the secret soul of Imogine,
Thou might'st acquit the faith of woman kind—
Since thou wert on my midnight pillow laid,
Friend hath forsaken friend—the brotherly tie
Been lightly loosed—the parted coldly met—
Yea, mothers have with desperate hands wrought harm
To little lives which their own bosoms lent.
But woman still hath loved—if that indeed
Woman e'er loved like me.'

This is very beautiful and affecting writing. The reader would suppose that it related to events woven into the web of the history; but no such thing. It is a purely voluntary or poetical fiction of possible calamity, arising out of the experience of the author, not of the heroine.

The whole of the character of Clotilda, her confidante, who enters immediately after, is superfluous. She merely serves for the heroine to vent the moods of her own mind upon, and to break her enthusiastic soliloquies into the appearance of a dialogue. There is no reason in the world for the confidence thus reposed in Clotilda, with respect to her love for the outlawed Bertram, but the eternal desire of talking. Neither does she at all explain the grounds of her marriage to Aldobrand, who her father was, or how his distresses induced her to renounce her former lover. The whole is an effusion of tender sentiments, sometimes very good and fine, but of which we neither know the origin, the circumstances, nor the object; for her passion for Bertram does not lead to any thing but the promise of an interview to part for ever, which promise is itself broken. Among other fine lines describing the situation of Imogine's mind, are the following:

'And yet some sorcery was wrought on me,
For earlier things do seem as yesterday;
But I've no recollection of the hour
They gave my hand to Aldobrand.'

Perhaps these lines would be more natural if spoken of the lady than by her. The descriptive style will allow things to be supposed or said of others, which cannot so well be believed or said by them. There is also a want of dramatic decorum in Bertram's description of

a monastic life addressed to the Prior. It should be a solitary reflection.

> 'Yea, thus they live, if this may life be called,
> Where moving shadows mock the parts of men.
> Prayer follows study, study yields to prayer—
> Bell echoes bell, till wearied with the summons,
> The ear doth ache for that last welcome peal
> That tolls an end to listless vacancy.'

That part of the play where the chief interest should lie, namely, in the scenes preceding the death of Aldobrand, is without any interest at all, from the nature of the plot; for there is nothing left either to hope or to fear; and not only is there no possibility of good, but there is not even a choice of evils. The struggle of Imogine is a mere alternation of senseless exclamations. Her declaring of her husband, 'By heaven and all its hosts, he shall not perish,' is downright rant. She has no power to prevent his death; she has no power even to will his safety, for he is armed with what she deems an unjust power over the life of Bertram, and the whole interest of the play centres in her love for this Bertram. Opposite interests destroy one another in the drama, like opposite forces in mechanics. The situation of Belvidera in Venice Preserved, where the love to her father or her husband must be sacrificed, is quite different, for she not only hopes to reconcile them, but actually does reconcile them. The speech of Bertram to the Knights after he has killed Aldobrand, and his drawing off the dead body, to contemplate it alone, have been much admired, and there is certainly something grand and impressive in the first suggestion of the idea; but we do not believe it is in nature. We will venture a conjecture, that it is formed on a false analogy to two other ideas, viz. to that of a wild beast carrying off its prey with it to its den, and to the story which Fuseli has painted, of a man sitting over the corpse of his murdered wife. Now we can conceive that a man might wish to feast his eyes on the dead body of a person whom he had loved, and conceive that there was no one else 'but they two left alone in the world,' but not that any one would have this feeling with respect to an enemy whom he had killed.

Mr. Kean as Bertram did several things finely; what we liked most was his delivery of the speech, 'The wretched have no country.' Miss Somerville as Imogine was exceedingly interesting; she put us in mind of Hogarth's Sigismunda. She is tall and elegant, and her face is good, with some irregularities. Her voice is powerful, and her tones romantic. Her mode of repeating the line,

> 'Th' Elysian dreams of lovers, *when they loved*,'

had the true poetico-metaphysical cadence, as if the sound and the sentiment would linger for ever on the ear. She might sit for the picture of a heroine of romance, whether with her form

> -decked in purple and in pall,
> When she goes forth, and thronging vassals kneel,
> And bending pages bear her footcloth well ;'

or whether the eye

> '———beholds that lady in her bower,
> That is her hour of joy ; for then she weeps,
> Nor does her husband hear !'

Bertram, or the Castle of St. Aldobrand, is written by an Irish Clergyman, whose name is Maturin. It is said to be his first successful production ; we sincerely hope it will not be the last.

ADELAIDE, OR THE EMIGRANTS

The Examiner. *Covent-Garden, May* 26, 1816.

A tragedy, to succeed, should be either uniformly excellent or uniformly dull. Either will do almost equally well. We are convinced that it would be possible to write a tragedy which should be a tissue of unintelligible common-places from beginning to end, in which not one word that is *said* shall be understood by the audience, and yet, provided appearances are saved, and nothing is *done* to trip up the heels of the imposture, it would go down. Adelaide, or the Emigrants, is an instance in point. If there had been one good passage in this play, it would infallibly have been damned. But it was all of a piece ; one absurdity justified another. The first scene was like the second, the second act no worse than the first, the third like the second, and so on to the end. The mind accommodates itself to circumstances. The author never once roused the indignation of his hearers by the disappointment of their expectations. He startled the slumbering furies of the pit by no dangerous inequalities. We were quite resigned by the middle of the third simile, and equally thankful when the whole was over. The language of this tragedy is made up of nonsense and indecency. Mixed metaphors abound in it. The 'torrent of passion rolls *along* precipices ;' pleasure is said to gleam upon despair 'like moss upon the desolate rock ;' the death of a hero is compared to the peak of a mountain setting in seas of glory, or some such dreadful simile, built up with ladders and scaffolding. Then the thunder and lightning are mingled with bursts of fury and

revenge in inextricable confusion; there are such unmeaning phrases as *contagious gentleness*, and the heroes and the heroine, in their transports, as a common practice, set both worlds at defiance.

The plot of this play is bad, for it is unintelligible in a great measure, and where it is not unintelligible, absurd. Count Lunenburg cannot marry Adelaide because 'his Emperor's frown' has forbidden his marriage with the daughter of an Emigrant Nobleman; and so, to avoid this imperial frown, he betrays her into a pretended marriage, and thus intends to divide his time between war and a mistress. Hence all the distress and mischiefs which ensue; and though the morality of the affair is characteristic enough of the old school, yet neither the Emperor's frown nor the Count's levity seem sufficient reasons for harrowing up the feelings in the manner proposed by the author, and plunging us into the horrors of the French Revolution at the same time. The exiled St. Evremond saw 'his lawful monarch's bleeding head, and yet he prayed;' he saw 'his castle walls crumbled into ashes by the devouring flames, and yet he prayed:' but when he finds his daughter betrayed by one of his legitimate friends, he can 'pray no more.' His wife, the Countess, takes some comfort, and she builds her hope on a word, which, she says, is of great virtue, the word, 'perhaps.' 'It is the word which the slave utters as he stands upon the western shores, and looks towards Afric's climes—*Perhaps!*' —Of the attention paid to costume, some idea may be formed by the circumstance, that in the church-yard where the catastrophe takes place, the inscriptions on the tomb-stones are all in German, though the people speak English. The rest is in the same style. The *Emigrants* is a political attempt to drench an English audience with French loyalty: now, French loyalty to the House of Bourbon, is a thing as little to our taste as Scotch loyalty to the House of Stuart; and when we find our political quacks preparing to pour their nauseous trash with false labels down our throats, we must 'throw it to the dogs: we'll none of it.'

Mr. Young, as the injured Count, raved without meaning, and grew light-headed with great deliberation. Charles Kemble, in tragedy, only spoils a good face. Mr. Murray, as the old servant of the family, was 'as good as a prologue,' and his helpless horror at what is going forward exceedingly amusing.

Miss O'Neill's Adelaide, which we suppose was intended to be the chief attraction of the piece, was to us the most unpleasant part of it. She has powers which ought not to be thrown away, and yet she trifles with them. She wastes them equally on genteel comedy and vulgar tragedy. Her acting in Adelaide, which in other circumstances might have been impressive, was to us repulsive. The

agonizing passion she expressed, required that our feelings should be wound up to the highest pitch, either by the imagination of the poet or the interest of the story, to meet it on equal terms. We are not in an ordinary mood prepared for the shrieks of mandrakes, for the rattles in the throat, for looks that drive the thoughts to madness. Miss O'Neill's acting is pure nature or passion: it is the prose of tragedy; for the poetry she must lean on her author. But strong passion must be invested with imagination by some one, either by the poet or the actor, before it can give delight, not to say, before it can be endured by the public. Her manner in the scene where she asks Lunenberg about her marriage, was much the same as when Monimia asks Polydore, 'Where did you rest last night?' Yet how different was the effect! in the one, her frantic eagerness only corresponded with the interest already excited; in the other, it shocked, because no interest had been excited. Miss O'Neill fills better than any one else the part assigned her by the author, but she does not *make* it, nor over-inform it with qualities which she is not bound to bring. She is, therefore, more dependent than any one else upon the character she has to represent; and as she originally owes her reputation to her powers of sensibility, she will perhaps owe its ultimate continuance to the cultivation of her taste in the choice of the characters in which she appears. The public are jealous of their favourites!

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR

The Examiner. *June* 9, 1816.

Mr. Kean had for his benefit at Drury-Lane Theatre, on Wednesday, the Comedy of Every Man in his Humour. This play acts much better than it reads. It has been observed of Ben Jonson, that he painted not so much human nature as temporary manners, not the characters of men, but their *humours*, that is to say, peculiarities of phrase, modes of dress, gesture, &c. which becoming obsolete, and being in themselves altogether arbitrary and fantastical, have become unintelligible and uninteresting. Brainworm is a particularly dry and abstruse character. We neither know his business nor his motives; his plots are as intricate as they are useless, and as the ignorance of those he imposes upon is wonderful. This is the impression in reading it. Yet from the bustle and activity of this character on the stage, the changes of dress, the variety of affected tones and gipsey jargon, and the limping, distorted gestures, it is a very amusing exhibition, as Mr. Munden plays it. Bobadil is the only actually striking character in the play, or which tells equally in the closet and

the theatre. The rest, Master Matthew, Master Stephen, Cob and Cob's Wife, were living in the sixteenth century. But from the very oddity of their appearance and behaviour, they have a very droll and even picturesque effect when acted. It seems a revival of the dead. We believe in their existence when we see them. As an example of the power of the stage in giving reality and interest to what otherwise would be without it, we might mention the scene in which Brainworm praises Master Stephen's leg. The folly here is insipid, from its seeming carried to an excess,—till we see it; and then we laugh the more at it, the more incredible we thought it before.

The pathos in the principal character, Kitely, is 'as dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage.' There is, however, a certain good sense, discrimination, or *logic of passion* in the part, which Mr. Kean pointed in such a way as to give considerable force to it. In the scene where he is about to confide the secret of his jealousy to his servant, Thomas, he was exceedingly happy in the working himself up to the execution of his design, and in the repeated failure of his resolution. The reconciliation-scene with his wife had great spirit, where he tells her, to shew his confidence, that 'she may sing, may go to balls, may dance,' and the interruption of this sudden tide of concession with the restriction—'though I had rather you did not do all this'—was a master-stroke. It was perhaps the first time a parenthesis was ever spoken on the stage as it ought to be. Mr. Kean certainly often repeats this artifice of abrupt transition in the tones in which he expresses different passions, and still it always pleases,—we suppose, because it is natural. This gentleman is not only a good actor in himself, but he is the cause of good acting in others. The whole play was got up very effectually. Considerable praise is due to the industry and talent shewn by Mr. Harley, in Captain Bobadil. He did his best in it, and that was not ill. He delivered the Captain's well-known proposal for the pacification of Europe, by killing twenty of them each his man a day, with good emphasis and discretion. Bobadil is undoubtedly the hero of the piece; his extravagant affectation carries the sympathy of the audience along with it, and his final defeat and exposure, though exceedingly humorous, is the only affecting circumstance in the play. Mr. Harley's fault in this and other characters is, that he too frequently assumes mechanical expressions of countenance and bye-tones of humour, which have not any thing to do with the individual part. Mr. Hughes personified Master Matthew to the life: he appeared 'like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring.' Munden did Brainworm with laudable alacrity. Oxberry's Master Stephen was very happily hit off; nobody plays the traditional fool of the English stage so well; he

seems not only foolish, but fond of folly. The two young gentlemen, Master Well-bred and Master Edward Knowell, were the only insipid characters

MRS. SIDDONS

The Examiner. *June* 16, 1816.

Players should be immortal, if their own wishes or ours could make them so; but they are not. They not only die like other people, but like other people they cease to be young, and are no longer themselves, even while living. Their health, strength, beauty, voice, fails them; nor can they, without these advantages, perform the same feats, or command the same applause that they did when possessed of them. It is the common lot: players are only *not* exempt from it. Mrs. Siddons retired once from the stage: why should she return to it again? She cannot retire from it twice with dignity; and yet it is to be wished that she should do all things with dignity. Any loss of reputation to her, is a loss to the world. Has she not had enough of glory? The homage she has received is greater than that which is paid to Queens. The enthusiasm she excited had something idolatrous about it; she was regarded less with admiration than with wonder, as if a being of a superior order had dropped from another sphere to awe the world with the majesty of her appearance. She raised Tragedy to the skies, or brought it down from thence. It was something above nature. We can conceive of nothing grander. She embodied to our imagination the fables of mythology, of the heroic and deified mortals of elder time. She was not less than a goddess, or than a prophetess inspired by the gods. Power was seated on her brow, passion emanated from her breast as from a shrine. She was Tragedy personified. She was the stateliest ornament of the public mind. She was not only the idol of the people, she not only hushed the tumultuous shouts of the pit in breathless expectation, and quenched the blaze of surrounding beauty in silent tears, but to the retired and lonely student, through long years of solitude, her face has shone as if an eye had appeared from heaven; her name has been as if a voice had opened the chambers of the human heart, or as if a trumpet had awakened the sleeping and the dead. To have seen Mrs. Siddons, was an event in every one's life; and does she think we have forgot her? Or would she remind us of herself by shewing us what *she was not*? Or is she to continue on the stage to the very last, till all her grace and all her grandeur gone, shall leave behind them only a melancholy blank? Or is she merely to be played off as 'the baby of a girl' for a few nights?—'Rather than

so,' come, Genius of Gil Blas, thou that didst inspire him in an evil hour to perform his promise to the Archbishop of Grenada, 'and champion us to the utterance' of what we think on this occasion.

It is said that the Princess Charlotte has expressed a desire to see Mrs. Siddons in her best parts, and this, it is said, is a thing highly desirable. We do not know that the Princess has expressed any such wish, and we shall suppose that she has not, because we do not think it altogether a reasonable one. If the Princess Charlotte had expressed a wish to see Mr. Garrick, this would have been a thing highly desirable, but it would have been impossible; or if she had desired to see Mrs. Siddons *in her best days*, it would have been equally so; and yet without this, we do not think it desirable that she should see her at all. It is said to be desirable that a Princess should have a taste for the Fine Arts, and that this is best promoted by seeing the highest models of perfection. But it is of the first importance for Princes to acquire a taste for what is reasonable: and the second thing which it is desirable they should acquire, is a deference to public opinion: and we think neither of these objects likely to be promoted in the way proposed. If it was reasonable that Mrs. Siddons should retire from the stage three years ago, certainly those reasons have not diminished since, nor do we think Mrs. Siddons would consult what is due to her powers or her fame, in commencing a new career. If it is only intended that she should act a few nights in the presence of a particular person, this might be done as well in private. To all other applications she should answer —'Leave me to my repose.'

Mrs. Siddons always spoke as slow as she ought: she now speaks slower than she did. 'The line too labours, and the words move slow.' The machinery of the voice seems too ponderous for the power that wields it. There is too long a pause between each sentence, and between each word in each sentence. There is too much preparation. The stage waits for her. In the sleeping scene, she produced a different impression from what we expected. It was more laboured, and less natural. In coming on formerly, her eyes were open, but the sense was shut. She was like a person bewildered, and unconscious of what she did. She moved her lips involuntarily; all her gestures were involuntary and mechanical. At present she acts the part more with a view to effect. She repeats the action when she says, 'I tell you he cannot rise from his grave,' with both hands sawing the air, in the style of parliamentary oratory, the worst of all others. There was none of this weight or energy in the way she did the scene the first time we saw her, twenty years ago. She glided on and off the stage almost like an apparition. In the close of

the banquet scene, Mrs. Siddons condescended to an imitation which we were sorry for. She said, 'Go, go,' in the hurried familiar tone of common life, in the manner of Mr. Kean, and without any of that sustained and graceful spirit of conciliation towards her guests, which used to characterise her mode of doing it. Lastly, if Mrs. Siddons has to leave the stage again, Mr. Horace Twiss will write another farewell address for her: if she continues on it, we shall have to criticise her performances. We know which of these two evils we shall think the greatest.

Too much praise cannot be given to Mr. Kemble's performance of Macbeth. He was 'himself again,' and more than himself. His action was decided, his voice audible. His tones had occasionally indeed a learned quaintness, like the colouring of Poussin; but the effect of the whole was fine. His action in delivering the speech, 'To-morrow and to-morrow,' was particularly striking and expressive, as if he had stumbled by an accident on fate, and was baffled by the impenetrable obscurity of the future.—In that prodigious prosing paper, the Times, which seems to be written as well as printed by a steam-engine, Mr. Kemble is compared to the ruin of a magnificent temple, in which the divinity still resides. This is not the case. The temple is unimpaired; but the divinity is sometimes from home.

NEW ENGLISH OPERA-HOUSE

The Examiner. *June 23, 1816.*

The New English Opera-House (late the Lyceum Theatre) in the Strand, opened on Saturday week. The carpenters are but just got out of it; and in our opinion they have made but an indifferent piece of work of it. It consists of lobbies and vacant spaces. The three tiers of boxes are raised so high above one another, that the house would look empty even if it were full, and at present it is not full, but empty. The second gallery, for fear of its crowding on the first, is thrown back to such an unconscionable height, that it seems like a balcony projecting from some other building, where the spectators do not pay for peeping. All this no doubt promotes the circulation of air, and keeps the Theatre cool and comfortable. Mr. Arnold's philosophy may be right, but our prejudices are strongly against it. Our notions of a summer theatre are, that it should look *smoking hot*, and feel more like a warm bath than a well. We like to see a summer theatre as crowded as a winter one, so that a breath of air is a luxury. We like to see the well-dressed company in the boxes languidly silent, and to hear the Gods noisy and quarrelling for want

of room and breath—the cries of 'Throw him over!' becoming more loud and frequent as the weather gets farther on into the dog-days. We like all this, because we are used to it, and are as obstinately attached to old abuses in matters of amusement, as kings, judges, and legislators are in state affairs.

The New Theatre opened with Up all Night, or the Smugglers' Cave; a piece admirably well adapted as a succedaneum for keeping the house cool and airy. The third night there was nobody there. To say the truth, we never saw a duller performance. The Actors whom the Manager has got together, are both new and strange. They are most of them recruits from the country, and of that description which is known by the vulgar appellation of the *awkward squad.* Mr. Russell (from Edinburgh, not our old friend Jerry Sneak) is the only one amongst them who understands his exercise. Mr. Short and Mr. Isaacs are singers, and we fear not good ones. Mr. Short has white teeth, and Mr. Isaacs black eyes. We do not like the name of Mr. Huckel. There is also a Mrs. Henley, who plays the fat Landlady in the Beehive, of the size of life.—Mr. Lancaster, who played Filch in the Beggars' Opera, and Mrs. W. Penson, who played the part of Lucy Lockitt tolerably, and looked it intolerably well. There is also Mr. Bartley, who is Stage-manager, and who threatens to be very prominent this season. There is also, from the old corps, Wrench, the easiest of actors; and there is Fanny Kelly, who after all, is not herself a whole company. We miss little Knight, and several other of our summer friends.

The Winter Theatres.—We must, we suppose, for the present, take our leave of the winter performances. We lately saw at Covent-Garden Mr. Emery's Robert Tyke, in the School of Reform, of which we had heard a good deal, and which fully justified all that we had heard of its excellence. It is one of the most natural and powerful pieces of acting on the stage; it is the sublime of low tragedy. We should like to see any body do it better. The scene where, being brought before Lord Avondale as a robber, he discovers him to have been formerly an accomplice in villainy; that in which he gives an account of the death of his father, and goes off the stage calling for 'Brandy, brandy!' and that in which he finds this same father, whom he had supposed dead, alive again, are, in our judgment, master-pieces both of pathos and grandeur. We do not think all excellence is confined to walking upon stilts. We conceive that Mr. Emery shewed about as much genius in this part, which he performed for his benefit, as Mr. Liston did afterwards in singing the song of Ti, tum, ti; we cannot say more of it. Genius appears to

us to be a very *unclassical* quality. There is but a little of it in the world, but what there is, is always unlike itself and every thing else. Your imitators of the tragic, epic, and grand style, may be multiplied to any extent, as we raise regiments of grenadiers.

Mrs. Mardyn, after an absence of some weeks, has appeared again at Drury-Lane, in the new part of the Irish Widow, the charming Widow Brady; and a most delightful representative she made of her —full of life and spirit, well-made, handsome, and good-natured. If it is a fault to be handsome, Mrs. Mardyn certainly deserves to be hissed off the stage.

THE JEALOUS WIFE

The Examiner. *June* 30, 1816.

The performances at Drury-Lane Theatre closed for the season on Friday evening last, with the Jealous Wife, Sylvester Daggerwood, and the Mayor of Garratt. After the play Mr. Rae came forward, and in a neat address, not ill delivered, returned thanks to the public, in the name of the Managers and Performers, for the success with which their endeavours to afford rational amusement and to sustain the legitimate drama, had been attended.

The play-bills had announced Mrs. Davison for the part of Mrs. Oakley, in the Jealous Wife. We have seen nothing of this Lady of late, except when she personated the Comic Muse (for one night only), on the second centenary of Shakespear's death. The glimpses we catch of her are, in one sense,

'Like angels' visits, short, and far between.'

She was absent on the present occasion, and Mrs. Glover took the part of the well-drawn heroine of Colman's amusing and very instructive comedy. Mrs. Glover was not quite at home in the part. She represented the passions of the woman, but not the manners of the fine lady. She succeeds best in grave or violent parts, and has very little of the playful or delicate in her acting. If we were to hazard a general epithet for her style of performing, we should say that it amounts to the *formidable*; her expression of passion is too hysterical, and habitually reminds one of hartshorn and water. On great occasions she displays the fury of a lioness who has lost her young, and in playing a queen or princess, deluges the theatre with her voice Her Quaker in Wild Oats, on the

contrary, is an inimitable piece of quiet acting. The demureness of the character, which takes away all temptation to be boisterous, leaves the justness of her conception in full force: and the simplicity of her Quaker dress is most agreeably relieved by the *embonpoint* of her person

The comedy of the Jealous Wife was not upon the whole so well cast here as at Covent-Garden. Munden's Sir Harry Beagle was not to our taste. It was vulgarity in double-heaped measure. The part itself is a gross caricature, and Munden's playing caricature is something like *carrying coals to Newcastle.* Russell's Lord Trinket was also a failure: he can only play a modern jockey Nobleman: Lord Trinket is a fop of the old school.

Mr. Harley played Sylvester Daggerwood, in the entertainment which followed, well enough to make us regret our old favourite Bannister, and attempted some imitations, (one of Matthews in particular) which were pleasant and lively, but not very like.

The acting of Dowton and Russell, in Major Sturgeon and Jerry Sneak, is well known to our readers: at least we would advise all those who have not seen it, to go and see this perfect exhibition of comic talent. The strut, the bluster, the hollow swaggering, and turkey-cock swell of the Major, and Jerry's meekness, meanness, folly, good-nature, and hen-pecked air, are assuredly done to the life. The latter character is even better than the former, which is saying a bold word. Dowton's art is only an imitation of art, of an affected or assumed character; but in Russell's Jerry you see the very soul of nature, in a fellow that is 'pigeon livered and lacks gall,' laid open and anatomized. You can see that his heart is no bigger than a pin, and his head as soft as a pippin. His whole aspect is chilled and frightened as if he had been dipped in a pond, and yet he looks as if he would like to be snug and comfortable, if he durst. He smiles as if he would be friends with you upon any terms; and the tears come in his eyes because you will not let him. The tones of his voice are prophetic as the cuckoo's under-song. His words are made of water-gruel. The scene in which he tries to make a confidant of the Major is great; and his song of 'Robinson Crusoe' as melancholy as the Island itself. The reconciliation-scene with his wife, and his exclamation over her, 'to think that I should make my Molly *veep*,' are pathetic, if the last stage of human infirmity is so. This farce appears to us to be both moral and entertaining; yet it does not take. It is considered as an unjust satire on the city and the country at large, and there is a very frequent repetition of the word 'nonsense,' in the house during the performance Mr. Dowton was even hissed, either

from the upper boxes or gallery, in his speech recounting the marching of his corps 'from Brentford to Ealing, and from Ealing to Acton;' and several persons in the pit, who thought the whole *low*, were for going out. This shews well for the progress of civilisation. We suppose the manners described in the Mayor of Garratt have in the last forty years become obsolete, and the characters ideal: we have no longer either hen-pecked or brutal husbands, or domineering wives; the Miss Molly Jollops no longer wed Jerry Sneaks, or admire the brave Major Sturgeons on the other side of Temple Bar; all our soldiers have become heroes, and our magistrates respectable, and the farce of life is o'er!

THE MAN OF THE WORLD

The Examiner. *July* 7, 1816.

We are glad to find the Haymarket Theatre re-opened with some good actors from the Winter Theatres, besides recruits. On Monday was played the Man of the World, Sir Pertinax Mac-Sycophant by Mr. Terry. This part was lately performed by Mr. Bibby at Covent-Garden without success; and we apprehend that his failure was owing to the extreme purity and breadth of his Scotch accent. Mr. Terry avoided splitting on this rock, by sinking the Scotch brogue almost entirely, and thus this national caricature was softened into a more general and less offensive portrait of a common Man of the World. On the whole, Mr. Terry gave not only less of the costume and local colouring of the character, but less of the general force and spirit than the former gentleman. He however displayed his usual judgment and attention to his part, with less appearance of effort than he sometimes shews. If Mr. Terry would take rather less pains, he would be a better actor. He is exceedingly correct in the conception of his characters, but in the execution he often takes twice the time in bringing out his words that he ought, and lays double the emphasis on them that is necessary. In the present case, Mr. Terry, probably from feeling no great liking to his part, laid less stress on particular passages, and was more happy on that account. The scene in which he gives the account of his progress in life to his son Egerton, was one of the most effectual. Mrs. Glover's Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt had considerable spirit and archness, as well as force. Of the new performers in it we cannot speak very favourably. The young gentleman who played Sydney, a Mr. Baker, seems really a clergyman by profession, and

to have left, rather imprudently, the prospect of a fellowship at Oxford or Cambridge. His voice and cadences are good; but they are fitter for the pulpit than the stage.

Mr. Watkinson, on Thursday played Sir Robert Bramble, in the Poor Gentleman, with a considerable share of that blunt native humour, and rustic gentility, which distinguish so large a class of characters on the English stage. We mean that sort of characters who usually appear in a brown bob-wig, and chocolate-coloured coat, with brass buttons. Of this class Mr. Watkinson, as far as we could judge on a first acquaintance, appears to be a very respectable, if not brilliant representative. A Miss Taylor made an elegant and interesting Emily, the daughter of the Poor Gentleman; and Mr. Foote played that personification of modern humanity, the Poor Gentleman himself. There is a tone of recitation in this actor's delivery, perhaps not ill suited to the whining sentimentality of the parts he has to play, but which is very tiresome to the ear. We might say to him as Caesar did to some one, 'Do you read or sing? If you sing, you sing very ill.' We must not omit to mention the part of Miss Lætitia Macnab, which was performed to the life by a Mrs. Kennedy of Covent-Garden Theatre, whom we never saw here before, but whom we shall certainly remember. Her hoop-petticoats, flying lappets, high head-dress, face, voice, and figure, reminded us but too well of that obsolete class of antiquated maidens of old families that flourished about fifty years ago, who had no idea of any thing but the self-importance which they derived from their ancestors, and of the personal attractions which were to be found in the ridiculousness of their dress. The effect was as surprising as it was painful. It was as if Miss Macnab had come in person from the grave. It was like the restoration of the Bourbons!

After this melancholy casualty, we had the Agreeable Surprise. Mrs. Gibbs played Cowslip delightfully. Fawcett was exceedingly laughable in Lingo; and would have been more so, if he had played it with more gravity. Fawcett's fault of late is, that he has not respect enough for his art. This is a pity; for his art is a very good art. At the scene between him and Mrs. Cheshire, (Mrs. Davenport), the house was in a roar. We never knew before that Lingo and Cowslip were descendants of Touchstone and Audrey. This is one of O'Keeffe's best farces, and his farces are the best in the world except Moliere's. O'Keeffe is (for he is still living) our English Moliere, and we here return him our most hearty thanks for all the hearty laughing he has given us. *C'est un bon garçon.*

There are in the Agreeable Surprise some of the most irresistible *double entendres* that can be conceived, and in Lingo's superb replication, 'A scholar! I was a master of scholars!' he has hit the height of the ridiculous.

MISS MERRY'S MANDANE

The Examiner. *July* 21, 1816.

A young lady whose name is Miss Merry, has appeared with great applause in the part of Mandane, in Artaxerxes, at the New English Opera. Miss Merry is not tall, but there is something not ungraceful in her person: her face, without being regular, has a pleasing expression in it; her action is good, and often spirited; and her voice is excellent. The songs she has to sing in this character are delightful, and she sung them very delightfully. Her timidity on the first night of her appearing was so great, as almost to prevent her from going on. But her apprehensions, though they lessened the power of her voice, did not take from its sweetness. She appears to possess very great taste and skill; and to have not only a fine voice, but (what many singers want) an ear for music. Her tones are mellow, true, and varied; sometimes exquisitely broken by light, fluttering half-notes—at other times reposing on a deep-murmuring bass. The general style of her singing is equable, and unaffected; yet in one or two passages, we thought she added some extraneous and unnecessary ornaments, and (for a precious note or two) lost the charm of the expression, by sacrificing simplicity to execution. This objection struck us most in the manner in which Miss Merry sung the beautiful air, 'If o'er the cruel tyrant Love,' which is an irresistible appeal to the sentiments, and seems, in its genuine simplicity, above all art. This song, and particularly the last lines, 'What was my pride, is now my shame,' &c. ought to be sung, as we have heard them sung, as if the notes fell from her lips like the liquid drops from the bending flower, and her voice fluttered and died away with the expiring conflict of passion in her bosom. If vocal music has an advantage over instrumental, it is, we imagine, in this very particular; in the immediate communication between the words and the expression they suggest, between the voice and the soul of the singer, which ought to mould every tone, whether deep or tender, according to the impulse of true passion. Miss Merry's execution does not rest entirely upon the ground of expression: she is not always thinking of the subject. Her 'Soldier tired,' and 'Let not rage thy bosom firing,' were both admirable. Her voice has not the piercing softness of Miss Stephens's, its clear

crystalline qualities. Neither has her style of singing the same originality, and simple pathos. Miss Stephens's voice and manner are her own: Miss Merry belongs to a class of singers, but that class is a very pleasing one, and she is at present at the head of it. She is an undoubted acquisition both to the New English Opera, and to the English stage.

Mr. Horn's Arbaces was very fine. He sings always in tune, and in an admirable *sostenuto* style. He keeps his voice (perhaps indeed) too much under him, and does not let it loose often enough. His manner of singing 'Water parted from the sea' was of this internal and suppressed character. Though this may be the feeling suggested by part of the words, yet certainly in other parts the voice ought to be thrown out, and as it were, go a journey, like the water's course. Of the other performers we can say nothing favourable.

EXIT BY MISTAKE

The Examiner. *July* 28, 1816.

We insert the following letter, which has been sent us, merely to show our impartiality:

'MR. EDITOR,—I have been to see the new Comedy Exit by Mistake, at the Theatre Royal Haymarket. As this piece is *sans* moral and *sans* interest, I am surprised at its being called a *Comedy*, for many of our old *Farces* are more worthy of the name. Perhaps the author fondly anticipated much pathos from Mrs. Kendal's scene with her son (Mr. Barnard), but it would have been much better if both mother and son had been omitted, for the latter is a hot-headed blockhead, who commits a most unjustifiable assault upon a *stranger*, in a *stranger's* house, by turning him out, which gross affront is in the last Act overlooked. In consequence of a letter about Mr. Roland's departure, accompanied by his will, it is supposed he had departed fron the *world* instead of the *country* where he was. This is the '*Exit by Mistake*,' but the chief mistakes arise from the *entrances* of the performers. The executor hearing that Roland (Mr. Terry) is alive and in town, goes to an inn to meet him, but most unaccountably mistakes Mr. Rattletrap (Russel) an actor just arrived from America, for his own friend, and even calls the actor by the name of Rattletrap. Poor Mr. Roland, in order to recover his property, inquires for an attorney, and is told there 's one *below*. Soon after the executor enters, and though dressed in a *brown* coat, he is mistaken for an attorney. There are other inferior mistakes in the piece, but the greatest mistake is the author's—for it is a Farce instead of a Comedy. As the play-bills state, that this piece has since been applauded by 'brilliant and crowded audiences,' and that 'no orders can be admitted;' the proprietors have no right to complain of their rival, the Lyceum Theatre, except Mr. Arnold should produce a good Opera to

oppose this Farcical Comedy, and then the public will see the utility of rival theatres. Mr. Tokely's character in it (Crockery) is the same which the same gentleman performs in the author's 'Love and Gout,' with this difference, that in one he is a dissatisfied gentleman, and in the other a whining servant. Mr. Jones's character (Restless Absent) keeps him in motion the first two Acts, but in the last he is quite stationary.

'DRAMATICUS.

'*July* 25, 1816.'

We do not agree with Dramaticus on the subject of the piece, which he so resolutely condemns. He puts us a little (though not much) in mind of John Dennis, who drew his sword on the author of a successful tragedy, without any other provocation. As to the title of this play, to which our critic so vehemently objects, we leave him to settle that point with the author. We do not judge of plays, or of any thing else by their titles.

The writer says, the Proprietors of the Haymarket have no right to complain, 'except Mr. Arnold should produce a good Opera to oppose this Farcical Comedy, and then the public will see the utility of rival theatres.' We wish Mr. Arnold would lose no time in convincing the public. As we have not the same faith as our correspondent in the power of rival theatres in screwing up the wits of their opponents, we did not go to the new comedy of Exit by Mistake, expecting either a profound moral or high interest; and so far we were not disappointed. But with a good deal of absurdity, there is some whim in it: there are several very tolerable puns in it, and a sufficient stock of lively passing allusions. It is light and laughable, and does well enough for a summer theatre. The part of Crockery in particular is very droll, and to us quite new, for we are not acquainted with 'the dissatisfied gentleman,' his predecessor, in Love and Gout. Crockery is a foolish fat servant (personated exceedingly well by Mr. Tokely) who complains that every thing is altered since he went abroad with his master, 'cries all the way from Portsmouth, because the mile-stones are changed, and is in despair because an old pigstye has been converted into a dwelling-house.' This whimpering, maudlin philosopher, is as tenacious of innovation as the late Mr. Burke, and as great an admirer of *the good old times*, as the editor of a modern Journal. In one thing we agree with honest Crockery, where he does not like to see the sign of the Duke of Marlborough's head pulled down for the Duke of Wellington's; in the first place, because the Duke of Marlborough had a very good head, and the Duke of Wellington's is a mere sign-post; in the second, because we think it a more meritorious act to drive out the English Bourbons, the Stuarts, than

to restore the French Stuarts, the Bourbons, to the throne of *their* ancestors. So much for the politics of the Theatre.

There is another new piece, A Man in Mourning for Himself, come out at the new English Theatre, which, whether it is Comedy, Opera, or Farce, we do not know. But—*de mortuis nil nisi bonum.* So let it pass. But there is a Mr. Herring in it, whom we cannot pass by without notice. He is the oddest fish that has lately been landed on the stage. We are to thank Mr. Arnold for bringing him ashore. This *did* require some sagacity, some discrimination. We never saw any thing more amphibious,—with coat-pockets in the shape of fins, and a jowl like gills with the hook just taken out. He flounders and flounces upon the stage with the airs and genius of a Dutch plaise. His person detonates with boisterous wit and humour, and his voice goes off like a cracker near a sounding-board. With these preparatory qualifications, he played a valet who is his own master; and the jumble of high life below stairs was very complete. This gentleman's gentleman was very coarse and very mawkish; very blustering and very sheepish; and runs his head into scrapes without the slightest suspicion. We have never seen Mr. Herring before; but on this occasion he was, according to our tastes, in fine pickle and preservation.

The Beggar's Opera was performed on Thursday, when Miss Merry appeared in the part of Polly, and Mr. Horn as Captain Macheath. Miss Merry displayed great sweetness and taste in most of the songs, and her acting was pleasing, though she laboured under considerable embarrassment. We liked her 'Ponder well,' and 'My all 's in my possession,' the best. She seemed to us not to be quite perfect either in 'Cease your funning,' or in the exquisite little air of 'He so teased me.' We have no doubt, however, that she will make in time a very interesting representative of one of the most interesting characters on the stage, for we hardly know any character more artless and amiable than Gay's Polly, except perhaps Shakespear's Imogen. And Polly has the advantage on the stage, for she *may be sung*, but Imogen cannot be *acted.*

Mr. Horn's Macheath was much better than what we have lately seen. He sung the songs well, with a little too much ornament for the profession of the Captain: and his air and manner, though they did not fall into the common error of vulgarity, were rather too precise and finical. Macheath should be a fine man and a gentleman, but he should be one of God Almighty's gentlemen, not a gentleman of the black rod. His gallantry and good-breeding should arise from

impulse, not from rule; not from the trammels of education, but from a soul generous, courageous, good-natured, aspiring, amorous. The class of the character is very difficult to hit. It is something between gusto and slang, like port-wine and brandy mixed. It is not the mere gentleman that should be represented, but the blackguard sublimated into the gentleman. This character is qualified in a highwayman, as it is qualified in a prince. We hope this is not a libel. Miss Kelly's Lucy was excellent. She is worthy to act Gay.

THE ITALIAN OPERA

The Examiner. *King's Theatre, August* 4, 1816.

In Schlegel's work on the Drama, there are the following remarks on the nature of the Opera:

'In Tragedy the chief object is the poetry, and every other thing is subordinate to it; but in the Opera, the poetry is merely an accessary, the means of connecting the different parts together, and it is almost buried under its associates. The best prescription for the composition of the text of an Opera is to give a poetical sketch, which may be afterwards filled up and coloured by the other arts. This anarchy of the arts, where music, dancing, and decoration endeavour to surpass each other by the most profuse display of dazzling charms, constitutes the very essence of the Opera. What sort of opera music would it be, where the words should receive a mere rythmical accompaniment of the simplest modulations? The fantastic magic of the Opera consists altogether in the luxurious competition of the different means, and in the perplexity of an overflowing superfluity. This would at once be destroyed by an approximation to the severity of the ancient taste in any one point, even in that of costume; for the contrast would render the variety in all the other departments quite insupportable. The costume of the Opera ought to be dazzling, and overladen with ornaments; and hence many things which have been censured as unnatural, such as exhibiting heroes warbling and trilling in the excess of despondency, are perfectly justifiable. This fairy world is not peopled by real men, but by a singular kind of singing creatures. Neither is it any disadvantage to us, that the Opera is conveyed in a language which is not generally understood; the text is altogether lost in the music, and the language, the most harmonious and musical, and which contains the greatest number of open vowels and distinct accents for recitative, is therefore the best.'

The foregoing remarks give the best account we have seen of that

splendid exhibition, the Italian Opera. These German critics can explain every thing, and upon any given occasion, *make the worse appear the better reason.* Their theories are always at variance with common sense, and we shall not in the present instance, undertake to decide between them. There is one thing, however, which we will venture to decide, which is, that the feelings of the English people must undergo some very elaborate process (metaphysical or practical) before they are thoroughly reconciled to this union of different elements, the consistency and harmony of which depends on their contradiction and discord. We take it, the English are so far from being an opera-going, that they are not even a play-going people, from constitution. You can hardly get them to speak their sentiments, much less to sing them, or to hear them sung with any real sympathy. The boxes, splendid as they are, and splendid as the appearance of those in them is, do not breathe a spirit of enjoyment. They are rather like the sick wards of luxury and idleness, where people of a certain class are condemned to perform the quarantine of fashion for the evening. The rest of the spectators are sulky and self-important, and the only idea which each person has in his head, seems to be that he is at the opera. Little interest is shewn in the singing or dancing, little pleasure appears to be derived from either, and the audience seem only to be stunned and stupified with wonder. The satisfaction which the English feel in this entertainment is very much *against the grain.* They are a people, jealous of being pleased in any way but their own.

We were particularly struck with the force of these remarks the other evening in the gallery, where our fellow-countrymen seemed to be only upon their good behaviour or self-defence against the ill-behaviour of others, some persons asserting their right of talking loud about their own affairs, and others resenting this, not as an interruption of their pleasures, but as an encroachment on their privileges. Soon after a Frenchman came in, and his eye at once fastened upon the ballet. At a particular air, he could no longer contain himself, but joined in chorus in an agreeable under-voice, as if he expected others to keep time to him, and exclaiming, while he wiped his forehead from an exuberance of satisfaction, his eyes glistening, and his face shining, '*Ah c'est charmant, c'est charmant!*' Now this, being ourselves English, we confess, gave us more pleasure than the opera or the ballet, in both of which, however, we felt a considerable degree of melancholy satisfaction, *selon la coutume de notre pays*—according to the custom of our country.

The opera was Cosi fan Tutti, with Mozart's music, and the ballet was the Dansomanie. The music of the first of these is really

enough (to borrow a phrase from a person who was also a great man in his way) 'to draw three souls out of one weaver:' and as to the ballet, it might make a Frenchman forget his country and all other things. This ballet is certainly the essence of a ballet. What a grace and a liveliness there is in it! What spirit and invention! What can exceed the ingenuity of the dance in which the favoured lover joins in with his mistress and the rival, and makes all sorts of advances to her, and receives her favours, her pressures of the hand, and even kisses, without being found out by the other, who thinks all these demonstrations of fondness intended for him! What an enthusiasm for art in the character of the master of the house, who is seized by the Dansomanie! What a noble and disinterested zeal in the pursuit and encouragement of his favourite science! What a mechanical sprightliness in all about him, particularly in the servant who throws down a whole equipage of china, while he is dancing with it on his head, and is rewarded by his master for this proof of devotion to his interests! What a sympathy throughout between the heels and the head, between the heart and the fingers' ends! The Minuet de la Cour, danced in full dresses, and with the well-known accompaniment of the music, put us in mind of the old chivalrous times of the Duke de Nemours and the Princess of Cleves, or of what really seems to us longer ago, the time when we ourselves used to be called out at school before the assembled taste and fashion of the neighbourhood, to go through this very dance with the partner whom we had selected for this purpose, and presented with a bunch of flowers on the occasion!

The Opera had less justice done it than the Ballet. The laughing Trio was spoiled by Mr. Naldi, who performs the part of an 'Old Philosopher' in it, but who is more like an impudent valet or *major-domo* of an hotel. We never saw any one so much at home; who seems so little conscious of the existence of any one but himself, and who throws his voice, his arms and legs about with such a total disregard of *bienseance*. The character is a kind of Opera Pandarus, who exposes the inconstancy of two young ladies, by entangling them in an intrigue with their own lovers in disguise. Mr. Braham, we are told, sings Mozart with a peculiar greatness of gusto. But this greatness of gusto does not appear to us the real excellence of Mozart. The song beginning *Secondate*, in which he and his friend (Signor Begri) call upon the gentle zephyrs by moonlight to favour their design, is exquisite, and 'floats upon the air, smoothing the raven down of darkness till it smiles.'

> 'And Silence wish'd, she might be never more
> Still to be so displaced.'

Madame Fodor's voice does not harmonize with the music of this composer. It is hard, metallic, and jars like the reverberation of a tight string. Mozart's music should seem to come from the air, and return to it. Madame Vestris is a pretty little figure, and is in this respect a contrast to Madame Fodor.

OLD CUSTOMS

The Examiner. *August* 11, 1816.

We have suffered two disappointments this week, one in seeing a farce that was announced and acted at the English Opera, and the other in not seeing one that was announced and not acted at the Haymarket. We should hope that which is to come is the best; for the other is very bad, as we think. Old Customs is a farce or operetta, in which an uncle (Mr. Bartley) and his nephew (Mr. Wrench) court the same young lady (Miss L. Kelly). She prefers the nephew, from whom she has received several letters. These, with her answers, she sends to Mr. Bartley in a packet or basket, to convince him of her real sentiments, and of the impropriety of his prosecuting his rivalry to his nephew. In the mean time, it being Christmas or New Year's Day (we forget which), Bartley's servant (Russell) receives a visit from his old mother, who, in this season of compliments and presents, brings him a little sister in a basket, and leaves it to his care, while she goes to see her acquaintance in the village. Russell, after singing a ludicrous lullaby to the baby, goes out himself and leaves it in the basket on the table, a great and improbable neglect, no doubt, of his infant charge. His master (Bartley) soon after comes in, and receives the letter from his mistress (Miss L. Kelly) informing him of a present she has sent him *in a basket*, meaning her packet of love-letters, and apologizing for the abrupt method she has taken of unfolding the true state of her heart and progress of her affections. Bartley looks about for this important confidential basket, and finds that which the old woman had left with her son, with its explanatory contents. At this indecency of the young lady, and indignity offered to himself, he grows very much incensed, struts and frets about the stage, and when Miss L. Kelly herself, with her father and lover, comes to ask his decision upon the question after the clear evidence which she has sent him, nothing can come up to the violence of his rage and impatience, but the absurdity of the contrivance by which it is occasioned. His nephew (Mr. Wrench) provokes him still farther, by talking of a present which he has left with him that morning, an embryo production of his efforts

to please, meaning a manuscript comedy, but which Mr. Bartley confounds with the living Christmas-box in the basket. A strange scene of confusion ensues, in which every one is placed in as absurd and ridiculous a situation as possible, till Russell enters and brings about an unforeseen *denouement*, by giving an account of the adventures of himself and his little brother.

Such is the plot, and the wit is answerable to it. There was a good deal of laughing, and it is better to laugh at nonsense than at nothing. But really the humours of punch and the puppet-shew are sterling, legitimate, classical comedy, compared with the stuff of which the Muse of the new English Opera is weekly delivered. But it is in vain to admonish. The piece, we understand, has since been withdrawn.

MY LANDLADY'S NIGHT-GOWN

The Examiner. *August* 18, 1816.

The new Farce at the Haymarket-Theatre, called My Landlady's Night-Gown, is made of very indifferent stuff. It is very tedious and nonsensical. Mr. Jones is the hero of the piece, and gives the title to it; for being closely pressed by some bailiffs, he suddenly slips on his Landlady's Night-gown, and escapes in disguise from his pursuers, by speaking in a feigned female voice to one of them, and knocking the other down by an exertion of his proper and natural prowess. Such is the story which he himself tells, to account for the oddity of his first appearance. Yet the apology is not necessary. Mr. Jones himself is always a greater oddity than his dress. There is something in his face and manner that bids equal defiance to disguise or ornament. The mind is affirmed by a great poet to be 'its own place:' and Nature, in making Mr. Jones, said to the tailor, You have no business here. Whether he plays my Lord Foppington in point-lace, or personates an old woman in My Landlady's Night-Gown, he is just the same lively, bustling, fidgetty, staring, queer-looking mortal; and the gradations of his metamorphosis from the nobleman to the footman are quite imperceptible. Yet he is an actor not without merit; the town like him, and he knows it; and as to ourselves, we have fewer objections to him the more we see of him. Use reconciles one to any thing. The only part of this entertainment which is at all entertaining, is the scene in which Russell, as the tailor, measures Jones for a new suit of clothes. This scene is not dull, but it is very gross, and the grossness is not carried off by a proportionable degree of wit. We could point out the

instances, but not with decency. So we shall let it alone. Tokely's character is very well, but not so good as Crockery. He is an actor of some humour, and he sometimes shews a happy conception of character; but we hope he will never play Sir Benjamin Backbite again.

New English Opera.

Miss Merry has disappointed us again, in not appearing in Rosetta. We may perhaps take our revenge, by not saying a word about her when she does come out. It was certainly a disappointment, though Miss Kelly played the part in her stead, who is a fine sensible girl, and sings not amiss. But there is that opening scene where Rosetta and Lucinda sit and sing with their song-books in their hands among the garden bowers and roses, for which we had screwed up our ears to a most critical anticipation of delight, not to be soothed but with the sweetest sounds. To enter into good acting, requires an effort; but to hear soft music is a pleasure without any trouble. Besides, we had seen Miss Stephens in Rosetta, and wanted to compare notes. How then, Miss Merry, could you disappoint us?

Mr. Horn executed the part of Young Meadows with his usual ability and propriety, both as an actor and a singer. We also think that Mr. Chatterley's Justice Woodcock was a very excellent piece of acting. The smile of recognition with which he turns round to his old flame Rosetta, in the last scene, told completely. Mrs. Grove's Deborah Woodcock reminded us of Mrs. Sparks's manner of acting it, which we take to be a high compliment.

Mr. Incledon appeared for the first time on this stage, as Hawthorn, and sung the usual songs with his well-known power and sweetness of voice. He is a true old English singer, and there is nobody who goes through a drinking song, a hunting song, or a sailor's song like him. He makes a very loud and agreeable noise without any meaning. At present he both speaks and sings as if he had a lozenge or a slice of marmalade in his mouth. If he could go to America and leave his voice behind him, it would be a great benefit—to the parent country.

CASTLE OF ANDALUSIA

The Examiner. *New English Opera, Sept.* 1, 1816.

We hear nothing of Miss Merry; and there is nothing else at this theatre that we wish to hear. Even Mr. Horn is nothing without her; he stands alone and unsupported; and the ear loses its relish and its power of judging of harmonious sounds, where it has nothing

but harshness and discordance to compare them with. We are sorry to include in this censure Miss Kelly, whose attempts to supply the place of *Prima Donna* of the English Opera, do great credit to her talents, industry, and good-nature, but still they have not given her a voice, which is indispensable to a singer, as singing is to an Opera. If the Managers think it merely necessary to get some one to *go through* the different songs in Artaxerxes, the Beggar's Opera, or Love in a Village, they might hire persons to read them through at a cheaper rate; and in either case, we fear they must equally have to hire the audience as well as the actors. Mr. Inceldon sung the duet of 'All's well,' the other night, with Mr. Horn, in the Castle of Andalusia, and has repeated it every evening since. Both singers were very much and deservedly applauded in it. Mr. Inceldon's voice is certainly a fine one, but its very excellence makes us regret that its modulation is not equal to its depth and compass. His best notes come from him involuntarily, or are often misplaced. The effect of his singing is something like standing near a music-seller's shop, where some idle person is trying the different instruments; the flute, the trumpet, the bass-viol, give forth their sounds of varied strength and sweetness, but without order or connection.

One of the novelties of the Castle of Andalusia, as got up at this theatre, was Mr. Herring's Pedrillo; an odd fish certainly, a very outlandish person, and whose acting is altogether incoherent and gross, but with a certain strong relish in it. It is only *too much* of a *good thing*. His oil has not salt enough to qualify it. He has a great power of exhibiting the ludicrous and absurd; but by its being either not like, or over-done, the ridicule falls upon himself instead of the character. Indeed he is literally to the comedian, what the caricaturist is to the painter; and his representation of footmen and fine gentlemen, is just such as we see in Gillray's shop-window. The same thing perhaps is not to be borne on the stage, though we laugh at it till we are obliged to hold our sides, in a caricature. We do not see, however, why this style of acting might not make a distinct species of itself, like the Italian *opera buffa*, with Scaramouch, Harlequin, and Pantaloon, among whom Mr. Herring would shine like a gold fish in a glass-case.

TWO WORDS

The Examiner. *Sept.* 8, 1816.

It was the opinion of Colley Cibber, a tolerable judge of such matters, that in those degenerate days, the metropolis could only

support one legitimate theatre, having a legitimate company, and acting legitimate plays. In the present improved state of the drama, which has 'gone like a crab backwards,' we are nearly of the same opinion, in summer time at least. We critics have been for the last two months like mice in an air-pump, gasping for breath, subsisting on a sort of theatrical half-allowance. We hate coalitions in politics, but we really wish the two little Theatres would club their stock of wit and humour into one. We should then have a very tight, compact little company, and crowded houses in the dog-days.

The new after-piece of 'Two Words,' at the English Opera, is a delightful little piece. It is a scene with robbers and midnight murder in it; and all such scenes are delightful to the reader or spectator. We can conceive nothing better managed than the plot of this. The spell-bound silence and dumb-show of Rose, the servant girl at the house in the forest, to which the benighted travellers come, has an inimitable effect; and to make it complete, it is played by Miss Kelly. The signals conveyed by the music of a lone flute in such a place, and at such a time, thrill through the ear, and almost suspend the breath. Mr. Short did not spoil the interest excited by the story, and both Mr. Wilkinson and Mrs. Grove did justice to the parts of the terrified servant, and the mischievous old housekeeper, who is a dextrous accomplice in the dreadful scene. The fault of the piece is, that the interest necessarily falls off in the second act, which makes it rather tiresome, though the second appearance of Miss Kelly in it, as the ward of Bartley at his great castle, is very ingeniously contrived, and occasions some droll perplexities to her lover, Don ——, whose life she has just saved from the hands of the assassins, only escaping from their vengeance herself by the arrival of her valorous guardian and a party of his soldiers. On the whole, this is the best novelty that has been brought out during the season at the English Opera, and we wish it every possible success.

Mr. Terry last week had for his benefit the Surrender of Calais. He played the part of Eustace de St. Pierre in it with judgment and energy, but without a pleasing effect. When Mr. Terry plays these tragic characters,

> 'The line too labours, and the thoughts move slow.'

He sticks in tragedy like a man in the mud; or to borrow a higher figure from a learned critic, 'he resembles a person walking on stilts in a morass.' We shall always be glad to lift him out of it into the common path of unpretending comedy: there he succeeds, and is himself. The Surrender of Calais is as interesting as a tragedy can

be without poetry in it. It has considerable pathos, though of a kind which borders on the shocking too much. It requires accomplished actors to carry it off; but it was not, in the present instance, very heroically cast. The Haymarket Theatre inclines more to comedy than to tragedy; and there are several scenes in this tragedy (for such it really is *till it is over*), which, 'not to be hated,' should be seen at the greatest possible distance that the stage allows. One advantage, at least, of our overgrown theatres is, that they throw the most distressing objects into a milder historical perspective.

THE WONDER

The Examiner. *Covent-Garden, Sept.* 15, 1816.

The Wonder is one of our good old English Comedies, which holds a happy medium between grossness and refinement. The plot is rich in intrigue, and the dialogue in *double entendre*, which however is so light and careless, as only to occasion a succession of agreeable alarms to the ears of delicacy. This genuine comedy, which is quite as pleasant to read as to see (for we have made the experiment within these few days, to our entire satisfaction) was written by an Englishwoman, before the sentimental, Ultra-Jacobinical German School, of which a short and amusing account has been lately given in the Courier, had spoiled us with their mawkish platonics and maudlin metaphysics. The soul is here with extreme simplicity considered as a mere accessary to the senses in love, and the conversation of bodies preferred to that of minds as much more entertaining. We do not subscribe our names to this opinion, but it is Mrs. Centlivre's, and we do not chuse to contradict a lady. The plot is admirably calculated for stage-effect, and kept up with prodigious ingenuity and vivacity to the end. The spectator is just beginning to be tired with the variety of stratagems that follow and perplex one another, when the whole difficulty is happily unravelled in the last scene. The *dove-tailing* of the incidents and situations (so that one unexpected surprise gives place to another, and the success of the plot is prevented by the unluckiest accident in the world happening in the very nick of time) supplies the place of any great force of character or sentiment. The time for the entrance of each person on the stage is the moment when they are least wanted, and when their arrival makes either themselves or somebody else look as foolish as possible. The Busy Body shews the same talent for invention and *coup-d'œil* for theatrical effect, and the laughableness of both comedies depends on a brilliant series of mis-timed exits and entrances. The Wonder is not,

however, without a moral; it exhibits a rare example of a woman keeping a secret, for the sake of a female friend, which she is under every temptation to break, and her resolution and fidelity are, after a number of mortifying accidents and fears, happily rewarded by the triumph both of her friendship and her love. The situation of Violante is more prominent than her character; or, at least, the character is more moral than entertaining. She is a young lady of great goodness of heart and firmness of principle, but who neither displays any great superiority of wit in extricating herself from the difficulties in which her regard for the safety of her friend involves her, nor of spirit in repelling the insinuations to which her reputation is exposed in the eyes of her lover. She submits to her situation with firmness of purpose and conscious reliance on her own innocence.

Miss Boyle, the young lady who appeared in this character on Friday, shewed herself not incompetent to its successful delineation. Her figure is tall, and her face, though her features are small, is pretty and expressive. Her articulation (for a first appearance) was remarkably distinct, and her voice is full and sweet. It is however rather sentimental than comic. She rounds her words too much, nor do they come 'trippingly from the tongue.' It is sufficient if the dialogue of genteel comedy comes with light-fluttering grace and gay animation from the lips; it should not come labouring up all the way from the heart. This young lady's general demeanour is easy and unaffected; and when she has overcome her timidity, we have no doubt she will give considerable spirit and dignity to the more serious scenes of the story. Her smile has much archness and expression; and we hope, from the promise of taste and talent which she gave through her whole performance, that she will prove an acquisition to the stage, in a line of comedy in which we are at present absolutely deficient. She was very favourably received throughout.

We do not think the play in general was well got up. Charles Kemble seemed to be rehearsing Don Felix with an eye to Macduff, or some face-making tragic character. He was only excellent in the drunken scene. Mrs. Gibbs at one time fairly took wing across the stage, and played the chamber-maid with too little restraint from vulgar decorums. Mr. Abbott never acts ill, but he does not answer to our idea of Colonel Briton. Emery's Gibby was sturdy enough, and seemed to prove what he himself says, that 'a Scotchman is not ashamed to shew his face any where.'

THE DISTRESSED MOTHER

The Examiner. *September* 22, 1816.

A Mr. Macready appeared at Covent-Garden Theatre on Monday and Friday, in the character of Orestes, in the Distressed Mother, a bad play for the display of his powers, in which, however, he succeeded in making a decidedly favourable impression upon the audience. His voice is powerful in the highest degree, and at the same time possesses great harmony and modulation. His face is not equally calculated for the stage. He declaims better than any body we have lately heard. He is accused of being violent, and of wanting pathos. Neither of these objections is true. His manner of delivering the first speeches in this play was admirable, and the want of increasing interest afterwards was the fault of the author, rather than the actor. The fine suppressed tone in which he assented to Pyrrhus's command to convey the message to Hermione was a test of his variety of power, and brought down repeated acclamations from the house. We do not lay much stress on his mad-scene, though that was very good in its kind, for mad-scenes do not occur very often, and when they do, had in general better be omitted. We have not the slightest hesitation in saying, that Mr. Macready is by far the best tragic actor that has come out in our remembrance, with the exception of Mr. Kean. We however heartily wish him well out of this character of Orestes. It is a kind of forlorn hope in tragedy. There is nothing to be made of it on the English stage, beyond experiment. It is a trial, not a triumph. These French plays puzzle an English audience exceedingly. They cannot attend to the actor, for the difficulty they have in understanding the author. We think it wrong in any actor of great merit (which we hold Mr. Macready to be) to come out in an ambiguous character, to salve his reputation. An actor is like a man who throws himself from the top of a steeple by a rope. He should chuse the highest steeple he can find, that if he does not succeed in coming safe to the ground, he may break his neck at once, and so put himself and the spectators out of farther pain.

Ambrose Phillips's Distressed Mother is a very good translation from Racine's Andromache. It is an alternation of topics, of *pros* and *cons*, on the casuistry of domestic and state affairs, and produced a great effect of *ennui* on the audience. When you hear one of the speeches in these rhetorical tragedies, you know as well what will be the answer to it, as when you see the tide coming up the river—you know that it will return again. The other actors filled their parts with successful mediocrity.

We highly disapprove of the dresses worn on this occasion, and

supposed to be the exact Greek costume. We do not know that the Greek heroes were dressed like women, or wore their long hair strait down their backs. Or even supposing that they did, this is not generally known or understood by the audience; and though the preservation of the ancient costume is a good thing, it is of more importance not to shock our present prejudices. The managers of Covent-Garden are not the Society of Antiquaries. The attention to costume is only necessary to preserve probability: in the present instance, it could only violate it, because there is nothing to lead the public opinion to expect such an exhibition. We know how the Turks are dressed, from seeing them in the streets; we know the costume of the Greek statues, from seeing casts in the shop-windows: we know that savages go naked, from reading voyages and travels: but we do not know that the Grecian Chiefs at the Siege of Troy were dressed as Mr. Charles Kemble, Mr. Abbott, and Mr. Macready were the other evening in the Distressed Mother. It is a discovery of the Managers; and they should have kept their secret to themselves.—The epithet in Homer, applied to the Grecian warriors, κάρη κομόωντες, is not any proof. It signifies not *long-haired*, but literally *bushy-headed*, which would come nearer to the common Brutus head, than this long dangling slip of hair. The oldest and most authentic models we have are the Elgin Marbles, and it is certain the Theseus is a *crop*. One would think this standard might satisfy the Committee of Managers in point of classical antiquity. But no such thing. They are much deeper in Greek costume and the history of the fabulous ages than those old-fashioned fellows, the Sculptors who lived in the time of Pericles. But we have said quite enough on this point.

Drury-Lane.

The chief novelties at this Theatre for the present week, have been a Mr. Bengough, from the Theatre Royal, Bath, and a Mrs. Knight, of the York Theatre, who have appeared in the characters of Baron Wildenheim and Agatha Friburg, in Lovers' Vows. Both have been successful. Mr. Bengough is an actor who shews considerable judgment and feeling, and who would produce more effect than he does, if he took less pains to produce it. The appearance of study takes from that of nature, and yet the expression of natural pathos is what he seems to excel in. He treads the stage well, and is, we think, an acquisition to the company.

We wonder the long-winded, heavy-handed writer in the Courier, who has been belabouring Bertram so woefully, does not fall foul of Lovers' Vows, as the quintessence of metaphysical licentiousness and

the ultra-Jacobinism of ultra-Jacobinical poetry. We think that everlasting writer might build thirty columns of lumbering criticisms, 'pointing to the skies,' on any single passage of this effusion of German sentiment and genius. We hope the worthy author will take this hint, and after he has exhausted upon this work the inexhaustible stores of his unspeakable discoveries and researches into the theory of mill-stones, we would recommend him to turn his pen to an almost forgotten play, called Remorse, at the bottom of which, if he will look narrowly, he will find 'a vaporous drop profound' of the same pernicious leaven; and by setting it fermenting, with the help of transcendental reasoning, and the mechanical operations of the spirit, may raise mists and clouds that will ascend above the moon, and turn the Courier office into a laundry!—Oh, we had forgot: Mrs. Mardyn played her old character of Amelia Wildenheim more charmingly than ever. She acts even with more grace and spirit than when she first came out in it, and looks as handsome as she used to do.

MISS BOYLE'S ROSALIND

The Examiner. *October* 6, 1816.

We have had a considerable treat this week, in Miss Boyle's Rosalind, at Covent-Garden Theatre. It is one of the chastest and most pleasing pieces of comic acting we have seen for some time. We did not think much of her in Violante, which might be owing to the diffidence of a first appearance, or to the little she has to do in the character. But she rises with her characters, and really makes a very charming Rosalind. The words of Shakespear become her mouth, and come from it with a delicious freshness, which gives us back the sense. There should be in the tones of the voice, to repeat Shakespear's verses properly, something resembling the sound of musical glasses. He has himself given us his idea on this subject, where he says, 'How silver sweet sound lovers' tongues by night.' We were not satisfied with Miss Boyle's enunciation in Violante. It wanted lightness and grace. Her Rosalind was spoken with more effect, and with more gaiety at the same time. The sentiment seemed to infuse into her the true comic spirit, and her acting improved with the wit and vivacity of the passages she had to deliver. This would be a defect in a character of mere manners, like Lady Townley, where there is always supposed to be an air or affectation of a certain agreeable vivacity or fashionable tone; but in a character of nature, like Rosalind, who is supposed to speak only what she

thinks, and to express delight only as she feels it, it was a great beauty. Her eyes also became more sparkling, and her smile more significant, according to the *naiveté* and force of what she had to utter. The highest compliment we can pay her acting is by applying to it what Shakespear has somewhere said of poetry—

> 'Our poesy is a gum that issues
> From whence 'tis nourish'd. The fire i'th' flint
> Shews not till it be struck. Our gentle flame
> Provokes itself, and like the current flies
> Each bound in chafes.'

To realize this description would be the perfection of comic acting. We must not forget her Cuckoo-song; indeed we could not, if we would. It was quite delightful. The tone and manner in which she repeated the word Cuckoo, was as arch and provoking as possible, and seemed to grow more saucy every time by the repetition, but still, though it hovered very near them, it was restrained from passing the limits of delicacy and propriety. She was deservedly *encored* in it; though this circumstance seemed to throw her into some little confusion. We have, however, two faults to find, both of which may be easily remedied. The first is, that there is a tendency to a lisp in some of her words: the second is, that there is a trip in her gait, and too great a disposition to keep in motion while she is speaking, or to go up to the persons she is addressing, as if they were deaf. Both these are defects of inexperience: the two necessary qualities for any young actress to set out with, in the higher comedy, are liveliness and elegance, or in other words, feeling with delicacy, and these we think Miss Boyle possesses. We were a good deal pleased with Mr. Young's Jaques. He spoke several passages well, and is upon the whole an *improving* actor.

Mr. Macready's Bentevole, in the Italian Lover, is very highly spoken of. We only saw the last act of it, but it appeared to us to be very fine in its kind. It was natural, easy, and forcible. Indeed, we suspect some parts of it were too natural, that is, that Mr. Macready thought too much of what his feelings might dictate in such circumstances, rather than of what the circumstances must have dictated to him to do. We allude particularly to the half significant, half hysterical laugh, and distorted jocular leer, with his eyes towards the persons accusing him of the murder, when the evidence of his guilt comes out. Either the author did not intend him to behave in this manner, or he must have made the other parties on the stage interrupt him as a self-convicted criminal. His appeal

to Manoah (the witness against him) to suppress the proofs which must be fatal to his honour and his life, was truly affecting. His resumption of a spirit of defiance was not sufficiently dignified, and was more like the self-sufficient swaggering airs of comedy, than the real grandeur of tragedy, which should always proceed from passion. Mr. Macready sometimes, to express uneasiness and agitation, composes his cravat, as he would in a drawing-room. This is, we think, neither graceful nor natural in extraordinary situations. His tones are equally powerful and flexible, varying with the greatest facility from the lowest to the highest pitch of the human voice.

MR. MACREADY'S OTHELLO

The Examiner. *October* 13, 1816.

We have to speak this week of Mr. Macready's Othello, at Covent-Garden Theatre, and though it must be in favourable terms, it cannot be in very favourable ones. We have been rather spoiled for seeing any one else in this character, by Mr. Kean's performance of it, and also by having read the play itself lately. Mr. Macready was more than respectable in the part; and he only failed because he attempted to excel. He did not, however, express the individual bursts of feeling, nor the deep and accumulating tide of passion which ought to be given in Othello. It may perhaps seem an extravagant illustration, but the idea which we think any actor ought to have of this character, to play it to the height of the poetical conception, is that of a majestic serpent wounded, writhing under its pain, stung to madness, and attempting by sudden darts, or coiling up its whole force, to wreak its vengeance on those about it, and falling at last a mighty victim under the redoubled strokes of its assailants. No one can admire more than we do the force of genius and passion which Mr. Kean shews in this part, but he is not stately enough for it. He plays it like a gipsey, and not like a Moor. We miss in Mr. Kean not the physiognomy, or the costume, so much as the *architectural* building up of the part. This character always puts us in mind of the line—

'Let Afric on its hundred thrones rejoice.'

It not only appears to hold commerce with meridian suns, and that its blood is made drunk with the heat of scorching skies; but it indistinctly presents to us all the symbols of eastern magnificence. It wears a crown and turban, and stands before us like a tower. All this, it may be answered, is only saying that Mr. Kean is not so

tall as a tower: but any one, to play Othello properly, ought to look taller and grander than any tower. We shall see how Mr. Young will play it. But this is from our present purpose. Mr. Macready is tall enough for the part, and the looseness of his figure was rather in character with the flexibility of the South: but there were no sweeping outlines, no massy movements in his action.

The movements of passion in Othello (and the motions of the body should answer to those of the mind) resemble the heaving of the sea in a storm; there are no sharp, slight, angular transitions, or if there are any, they are subject to this general swell and commotion. Mr. Kean is sometimes too wedgy and determined; but Mr. Macready goes off like a shot, and startles our sense of hearing. One of these sudden explosions was when he is in such haste to answer the demands of the Senate on his services: 'I do agnise a natural hardness,' &c. as if he was impatient to exculpate himself from some charge, or wanted to take them at their word lest they should retract. There is nothing of this in Othello. He is calm and collected; and the reason why he is carried along with such vehemence by his passions when they are roused, is, that he is moved by their collected force. Another fault in Mr. Macready's conception was, that he whined and whimpered once or twice, and tried to affect the audience by affecting a pitiful sensibility, not consistent with the dignity and masculine imagination of the character: as where he repeated, 'No, not much moved,' and again, 'Othello's occupation 's gone,' in a childish treble. The only part which should approach to this effeminate tenderness of complaint is his reflection, 'Yet, oh the pity of it, Iago, the pity of it!' What we liked best was his ejaculation, 'Swell, bosom, with thy fraught, *for 'tis of aspick's tongues.*' This was forcibly given, and as if his expression were choaked with the bitterness of passion. We do not know how he would have spoken the speech, 'Like to the Pontic sea that knows no ebb,' &c. which occurs just before, for it was left out. There was also something fine in his uneasiness and inward starting at the name of Cassio, but it was too often repeated, with a view to effect. Mr. Macready got most applause in such speeches as that addressed to Iago, 'Horror on horror's head accumulate!' This should be a lesson to him. He very injudiciously, we think, threw himself on a chair at the back of the stage, to deliver the farewell apostrophe to Content, and to the 'pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war.' This might be a relief to him, but it distressed the audience.—On the whole, we think Mr. Macready's powers are more adapted to the declamation than to the acting of

passion: that is, that he is a better orator than actor. As to Mr. Young's Iago, 'we never saw a gentleman acted finer.' Mrs. Faucit's Desdemona was very pretty. Mr. C. Kemble's Cassio was excellent.

Drury-Lane.

The town has been entertained this week by seeing Mr. Stephen Kemble in the part of Sir John Falstaff, as they were formerly with seeing Mr. Lambert in his own person. We see no more reason why Mr. Stephen Kemble should play Falstaff, than why Louis xviii. is qualified to fill a throne, because he is fat, and belongs to a particular family. Every fat man cannot represent a great man. The knight was fat; so is the player: the Emperor was fat, so is the King who stands in his shoes. But there the comparison ends. There is no sympathy in mind—in wit, parts, or discretion. Sir John (and so we may say of the gentleman at St. Helena) 'had guts in his brains.' The mind was the man. His body did not weigh down his wit. His spirits shone through him. He was not a mere paunch, a bag-pudding, a lump of lethargy, a huge falling sickness, an imminent apoplexy, with water in the head.

The Managers of Drury-Lane, in providing a Sir John Falstaff to satisfy the taste of the town, seem to ask only with Mr. Burke's political carcass-butchers, 'How he cuts up in the cawl: how he tallows in the kidneys!' We are afraid the Junto of Managers of Drury-Lane are not much wiser than the junto of Managers of the affairs of Europe. This, according to the luminous and voluminous critic in the Courier, is because their affairs are not under the management of a single person. Would the same argument prove that the affairs of Europe had better have been under the direction of one man? 'The gods have not made' the writer in the Courier logical as well as 'poetical.' By the rule above hinted at, every actor is qualified to play Falstaff who is physically incapacitated to play any other character. Sir John Falstaffs may be fatted up like prize oxen. Nor does the evil in this case produce its own remedy, as where an actor's success depends upon his own leanness and that of the part he plays. Sir Richard Steele tells us (in one of the Tatlers) of a poor actor in his time, who having nothing to do, fell away, and became such a wretched meagre-looking object, that he was pitched upon as a proper person to represent the starved Apothecary in Romeo and Juliet. He did this so much to the life, that he was repeatedly called upon to play it: but his person improving with his circumstances, he was in a short time rendered unfit to play it with the same effect as before, and laid aside. Having no other resource,

he accordingly fell away again with the loss of his part, and was again called upon to appear in it with his former reputation. Any one, on the contrary, who thrives in Falstaff, is always in an increasing capacity to overlay the part.—But we have done with this unpleasant subject.

THEATRICAL DEBUTS

The Examiner. *October* 20, 1816.

There have been two theatrical or operatic debuts, to which we are in arrears, and of which we must say a word—Miss Mori's Rosetta in Love in a Village, at Covent-Garden, and Miss Keppel's Polly in the Beggar's Opera, at Drury-Lane. Both of them appeared to us to be indifferent. Miss Mori is by much the best singer of the two, but there is something exceedingly unprepossessing and hard both in her voice and manner. She sings without the least feeling, or lurking consciousness that such a thing is required in a singer. The notes proceed from her mouth as mechanically, as *unmitigated* by the sentiment, as if they came from the sharp hautboy or grating bassoon. We do not mean that her voice is disagreeable in itself, but it wants softness and sweetness of modulation. The words of the songs neither seem to tremble on her lips, nor play around her heart. Miss Mori did not look the character. Rosetta is to be sure a waiting-maid, but then she is also a young lady in disguise. There was no appearance of the *incognita* in Miss Mori. She seemed in downright earnest, like one of the country girls who come to be hired at the statute-fair. She was quite insensible of her situation, and came forward to prove herself a fine singer, as one of her fellow-servants might have done to answer to a charge of having stolen something. We never saw a *debutante* more at ease with the audience: we suppose she has played in the country. Miss Matthews, who is a good-natured girl, and wished to *patronize* her on so delicate an emergency, presently found there was no occasion for her services, and withdrew from the attempt with some trepidation.

If Miss Mori did not enchant us by her incomprehensible want of sensibility, neither did Miss Keppel by the affectation of it. Sensibility is a very pretty thing, but it will not do to make a plaything of, at least in public. It is not enough that an actress tries to atone for defects by throwing herself on the indulgence of the audience:—their eyes and ears must be satisfied, as well as their self-love. Miss Keppel acts with very little grace, and sings very much out of tune.

There were some attempts made to prejudice the audience against this young lady before she appeared: but they only had the effect which they deserved, of procuring a more flattering reception than she would otherwise have met with: but we do not think she will ever become a favourite with the town.

MR. KEMBLE'S CATO

The Examiner. *October* 27, 1816.

Mr. Kemble has resumed his engagements at Covent-Garden Theatre for the season; it is said in the play-bills, for the last time. There is something in the word *last*, that, 'being mortal,' we do not like on these occasions: but there is this of good in it, that it throws us back on past recollections, and when we are about to take leave of an old friend, we feel desirous to settle all accounts with him, and to see that the balance is not against us, on the score of gratitude. Mr. Kemble will, we think, find that the public are just, and his last season, if it is to be so, will not, we hope, be the least brilliant of his career. As his meridian was bright, so let his sunset be golden, and without a cloud. His reception in Cato, on Friday, was most flattering, and he well deserved the cheering and cordial welcome which he received. His voice only failed him in strength; but his tones, his looks, his gestures, were all that could be required in the character, He is the most classical of actors. He is the only one of the moderns, who both in figure and action approaches the beauty and grandeur of the antique. In the scene of the soliloquy, just before his death, he was rather inaudible, and indeed the speech itself is not worth hearing; but his person, manner, and dress, seemed cast in the very mould of Roman elegance and dignity.

THE IRON CHEST

The Examiner. *December* 1, 1816.

The Iron Chest is founded on the story of Caleb Williams, one of the best novels in the language, and the very best of the modern school: but the play itself is by no means the best play that ever was written, either in ancient or modern times, though really in modern times we do not know of any much better. Mr. Colman's serious style, which is in some measure an imitation of Shakespear's, is natural and flowing; and there is a constant intermixture as in our elder drama, a *melange* of the tragic and comic; but there is rather

a want of force and depth in the impassioned parts of his tragedies, and what there is of this kind, is impeded in its effect by the comic. The two plots (the serious and ludicrous) do not seem going on and gaining ground at the same time, but each part is intersected and crossed by the other, and has to set out again in the next scene, after being thwarted in the former one, like a person who has to begin a story over again in which he has been interrupted. In Shakespear, the comic parts serve only as a relief to the tragic. Colman's tragic scenes are not high-wrought enough to require any such relief; and this perhaps may be a sufficient reason why modern writers, who are so sparing of their own nerves, and those of their readers, should not be allowed to depart from the effeminate simplicity of the classic style. In Shakespear, again, the comic varieties are only an accompaniment to the loftier tragic movement: at least the only exception is in the part of Falstaff in Henry IV. which is not however a tragedy of any deep interest:—in Colman you do not know whether the comedy or tragedy is principal; whether he made the comic for the sake of the tragic, or the tragic for the sake of the comic; and you suspect he would be as likely as any of his contemporaries to parody his own most pathetic passages, just as Munden caricatures the natural touches of garrulous simplicity in old Adam Winterton, to make the galleries and boxes laugh. The great beauty of Caleb Williams is lost in the play. The interest of the novel arises chiefly from two things: the gradual working up of the curiosity of Caleb Williams with respect to the murder, by the incessant goading on of which he extorts the secret from Falkland, and then from the systematic persecution which he undergoes from his master, which at length urges him to reveal the secret to the world. Both these are very ingeniously left out by Mr. Colman, who jumps at a conclusion, but misses his end.

The history of the Iron Chest is well known to dramatic readers. Mr. Kemble either could not, or would not play the part of Sir Edward Mortimer (the Falkland of Mr. Godwin's novel)—he made nothing of it, or at least, made short work of it, for it was only played one night. He had a cough and a cold, and he hemmed and hawed, and whined and drivelled through the part in a marvellous manner. Mr. Colman was enraged at the ill-success of his piece, and charged it upon Kemble's acting, who he said did not do his best. Now we confess he generally tries to do his best, and if that best is no better, it is not his fault. We think the fault was in the part, which wants circumstantial dignity. Give Mr. Kemble only the *man* to play, why, he is nothing; give him the

paraphernalia of greatness, and he is great. He 'wears his heart in compliment extern.' He is the statue on the pedestal, that cannot come down without danger of shaming its worshippers; a figure that tells well with appropriate scenery and dresses; but not otherwise. Mr. Kemble contributes his own person to a tragedy—but only that. The poet must furnish all the rest, and make the other parts equally dignified and graceful, or Mr. Kemble will not help him out. He will not lend dignity to the mean, spirit to the familiar; he will not impart life and motion, passion and imagination, to all around him, for he has neither life nor motion, passion nor imagination in himself. He minds only the conduct of his own person, and leaves the piece to shift for itself. Not so Mr. Kean. 'Truly he hath a devil;' and if the fit comes over him too often, yet as tragedy is not the representation of *still-life*, we think this much better than being never roused at all. We like

> 'The fiery soul that working out its way,
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
> And o'er informed the tenement of clay.'

Mr. Kean has passion and energy enough to afford to lend it to the circumstances in which he is placed, without leaning upon them for support. He can make a dialogue between a master and a servant in common life, tragic, or infuse a sentiment into the Iron Chest. He is not afraid of being let down by his company. Formal dignity and studied grace are ridiculous, except in particular circumstances; passion and nature are every where the same, and these Mr. Kean carries with him into all his characters, and does not want the others. In the last, however, which are partly things of manner and assumption, he improves, as well as in the recitation of set speeches; for example, in the Soliloquy on Honour, in the present play. His description of the assassination of his rival to Wilford was admirable, and the description of his 'seeing his giant form roll before him in the dust,' was terrific and grand. In the picturesque expression of passion, by outward action, Mr. Kean is unrivalled. The transitions in this play, from calmness to deep despair, from concealed suspicion to open rage, from smooth decorous indifference to the convulsive agonies of remorse, gave Mr. Kean frequent opportunities for the display of his peculiar talents. The mixture of common-place familiarity and solemn injunction in his speeches to Wilford when in the presence of others, was what no other actor could give with the same felicity and force. The last scene of all—his coming to life again after his swooning at the fatal discovery of his guilt, and then falling back after a ghastly struggle, like a man waked from the

tomb, into despair and death in the arms of his mistress, was one of those consummations of the art, which those who have seen and have not felt them in this actor, may be assured that they have never seen or felt any thing in the course of their lives, and never will to the end of them.

MR. KEMBLE'S KING JOHN

The Examiner. *Covent-Garden, December* 8, 1816.

We wish we had never seen Mr. Kean. He has destroyed the Kemble religion; and it is the religion in which we were brought up. Never again shall we behold Mr. Kemble with the same pleasure that we did, nor see Mr. Kean with the same pleasure that we have seen Mr. Kemble formerly. We used to admire Mr. Kemble's figure and manner, and had no idea that there was any want of art or nature. We feel the force and nature of Mr. Kean's acting, but then we feel the want of Mr. Kemble's person. Thus an old and delightful prejudice is destroyed, and no new enthusiasm, no second idolatry comes to take its place. Thus, by degrees, knowledge robs us of pleasure, and the cold icy hand of experience freezes up the warm current of the imagination, and crusts it over with unfeeling criticism. The knowledge we acquire of various kinds of excellence, as successive opportunities present themselves, leads us to acquire a combination of them which we never find realized in any individual, and all the consolation for the disappointment of our fastidious expectations is in a sort of fond and doating retrospect of the past. It is possible indeed that the force of prejudice might often kindly step in to suspend the chilling effects of experience, and we might be able to see an old favourite by a voluntary forgetfulness of other things, as we saw him twenty years ago; but his friends take care to prevent this, and by provoking invidious comparisons, and crying up their idol as a model of abstract perfection, force us to be ill-natured in our own defence.

We went to see Mr. Kemble's King John, and he became the part so well, in costume, look, and gesture, that if left to ourselves, we could have gone to sleep over it, and dreamt that it was fine, and 'when we waked, have cried to dream again.' But we were told that it was really fine, as fine as Garrick, as fine as Mrs. Siddons, as fine as Shakespear; so we rubbed our eyes and kept a sharp look out, but we saw nothing but a deliberate intention on the part of Mr. Kemble to act the part finely. And so he did in a certain sense, but not by any means as Shakespear wrote it, nor as it might

be played. He did not harrow up the feelings, he did not electrify the sense: he did not enter into the nature of the part himself, nor consequently move others with terror or pity. The introduction to the scene with Hubert was certainly excellent: you saw instantly, and before a syllable was uttered, partly from the change of countenance, and partly from the arrangement of the scene, the purpose which had entered his mind to murder the young prince. But the remainder of this trying scene, though the execution was elaborate—painfully elaborate, and the outline well conceived, wanted the filling up, the true and master touches, the deep piercing heartfelt tones of nature. It was done well and skilfully, *according to the book of arithmetic;* but no more. Mr. Kemble, when he approaches Hubert to sound his disposition, puts on an insidious, insinuating, fawning aspect, and so he ought; but we think it should not be, though it was, that kind of wheedling smile, as if he was going to persuade him that the business he wished him to undertake was a mere jest; and his natural repugnance to it an idle prejudice, that might be carried off by a certain pleasant drollery of eye and manner. Mr. Kemble's look, to our apprehension, was exactly as if he had just caught the eye of some person of his acquaintance in the boxes, and was trying to suppress a rising smile at the metamorphosis he had undergone since dinner. Again, he changes his voice three several times, in repeating the name of Hubert; and the changes might be fine, but they did not vibrate on our feelings; so we cannot tell. They appeared to us like a tragic *voluntary*. Through almost the whole scene this celebrated actor did not seem to feel the part itself as it was set down for him, but to be considering how he ought to feel it, or how he should express by rule and method what he did not feel. He was sometimes slow, and sometimes hurried: sometimes familiar, and sometimes solemn: but always with an evident design and determination to be so. The varying tide of passion did not appear to burst from the source of nature in his breast, but to be drawn from a theatrical leaden cistern, and then directed through certain conduit-pipes and artificial channels, to fill the audience with well regulated and harmless sympathy.

We are afraid, judging from the effects of this representation, that 'man delight not us, nor woman neither:' for we did not like Miss O'Neill's Constance better, nor so well as Mr. Kemble's King John. This character, more than any other of Shakespear's females, treads perhaps upon the verge of extravagance; the impatience of grief, combined with the violence of her temper, borders on insanity: her imagination grows light-headed. But still the boundary between poetry and phrensy is not passed: she is neither a virago nor mad.

Miss O'Neill gave more of the vulgar than the poetical side of the character. She generally does so of late. Mr. Charles Kemble in the Bastard, had the 'bulk, the thews, the sinews' of Falconbridge: would that he had had 'the spirit' too. There was one speech which he gave well—'Could Sir Robert make this leg?' And suiting the action to the word, as well he might, it had a great effect upon the house.

CORIOLANUS

The Examiner. *December* 15, 1816.

Coriolanus has of late been repeatedly acted at Covent-Garden Theatre. Shakespear has in this play shewn himself well versed in history and state-affairs. Coriolanus is a storehouse of political common-places. Any one who studies it may save himself the trouble of reading Burke's Reflections, or Paine's Rights of Man, or the Debates in both Houses of Parliament since the French Revolution or our own. The arguments for and against aristocracy, or democracy, on the privileges of the few and the claims of the many, on liberty and slavery, power and the abuse of it, peace and war, are here very ably handled, with the spirit of a poet, and the acuteness of a philosopher. Shakespear himself seems to have had a leaning to the arbitrary side of the question, perhaps from some feeling of contempt for his own origin; and to have spared no occasion of baiting the rabble. What he says of them is very true: what he says of their betters is also very true, though he dwells less upon it. The cause of the people is indeed but ill calculated as a subject for poetry: it admits of rhetoric, which goes into argument and explanation, but it presents no immediate or distinct images to the mind, 'no jutting frieze, buttress, or coigne of vantage' for poetry 'to make its pendant bed and procreant cradle in.' The language of poetry naturally falls in with the language of power. The imagination is an exaggerating and exclusive faculty: it takes from one thing to add to another: it accumulates circumstances together to give the greatest possible effect to a favourite object. The understanding is a dividing and measuring faculty: it judges of things, not according to their immediate impression on the mind, but according to their relations to one another. The one is a monopolizing faculty, which seeks the greatest quantity of present excitement by inequality and disproportion; the other is a distributive faculty, which seeks the greatest quantity of ultimate good by justice and proportion. The one is an aristocratical, the other a republican

faculty. The principle of poetry is a very anti-levelling principle. It aims at effect, it exists by contrast. It admits of no medium. It is every thing by excess. It rises above the ordinary standard of sufferings and crimes. It presents an imposing appearance. It shews its head turretted, crowned and crested. Its front is gilt and blood-stained. Before it, 'it carries noise, and behind it, it leaves tears.' It has its altars and its victims, sacrifices, human sacrifices. Kings, priests, nobles, are its train-bearers; tyrants and slaves its executioners—'Carnage is its daughter!' Poetry is right royal. It puts the individual for the species, the one above the infinite many, might before right. A lion hunting a flock of sheep or a herd of wild asses, is a more poetical object than they; and we even take part with the lordly beast, because our vanity, or some other feeling, makes us disposed to place ourselves in the situation of the strongest party. So we feel some concern for the poor citizens of Rome, when they meet together to compare their wants and grievances, till Coriolanus comes in, and, with blows and big words, drives this set of 'poor rats,' this rascal scum, to their homes and beggary, before him. There is nothing heroical in a multitude of miserable rogues not wishing to be starved, or complaining that they are like to be so; but when a single man comes forward to brave their cries, and to make them submit to the last indignities, from mere pride and self-will, our admiration of his prowess is immediately converted into contempt for their pusillanimity. The insolence of power is stronger than the plea of necessity. The tame submission to usurped authority, or even the natural resistance to it, has nothing to excite or flatter the imagination; it is the assumption of a right to insult or oppress others, that carries an imposing air of superiority with it. We had rather be the oppressor than the oppressed.

The love of power in ourselves, and the admiration of it in others, are both natural to man; the one makes him a tyrant, the other a slave. Wrong, dressed out in pride, pomp, and circumstance, has more attraction than abstract right.—Coriolanus complains of the fickleness of the people: yet the instant he cannot gratify his pride and obstinacy at their expense, he turns his arms against his country. If his country was not worth defending, why did he build his pride on its defence? He is a conqueror and a hero; he conquers other countries, and makes this a plea for enslaving his own; and when he is prevented from doing so, he leagues with its enemies to destroy his country. He rates the people 'as if he were a God to punish, and not a man of their infirmity.' He scoffs at one of their tribunes for maintaining their rites and franchises: 'Mark you his absolute *shall*?' not marking his own absolute *will* to take every thing from

them; his impatience of the slightest opposition to his own pretensions being in proportion to their arrogance and absurdity. If the great and powerful had the beneficence and wisdom of gods, then all this would have been well: if with greater knowledge of what is good for the people, they had as great a care for their interest as they have for their own; if they were seated above the world, sympathising with their welfare, but not feeling the passions of men, receiving neither good nor hurt from them, but bestowing their benefits as free gifts on them, they might then rule over them like another Providence. But this is not the case. Coriolanus is unwilling that the Senate should shew their 'cares' for the people, lest their 'cares' should be construed into 'fears,' to the subversion of all due authority; and he is no sooner disappointed in his schemes to deprive the people not only of the cares of the state, but of all power to redress themselves, than Volumnia is made madly to exclaim,

> 'Now the red pestilence strike all trades in Rome,
> And occupations perish.'

This is but natural: it is but natural for a mother to have more regard for her son than for a whole city: but then the city should be left to take some care of itself. The care of the state cannot, we here see, be safely entrusted to maternal affection, or to the domestic charities of high life. The great have private feelings of their own, to which the interests of humanity and justice must courtesy. Their interests are so far from being the same as those of the community, that they are in direct and necessary opposition to them; their power is at the expense of our weakness; their riches, of our poverty; their pride, of our degradation; their splendour, of our wretchedness; their tyranny of our servitude. If they had the superior intelligence ascribed to them (which they have not) it would only render them so much more formidable; and from gods would convert them into devils.

The whole dramatic moral of Coriolanus is, that those who have little shall have less, and that those who have much shall take all that others have left. The people are poor, therefore they ought to be starved. They are slaves, therefore they ought to be beaten. They work hard, therefore they ought to be treated like beasts of burden. They are ignorant, therefore they ought not to be allowed to feel that they want food, or clothing, or rest, that they are enslaved, oppressed, and miserable. This is the logic of the imagination and the passions; which seek to aggrandize what excites admiration, and to heap contempt on misery, to raise power into tyranny, and to make tyranny

absolute; to thrust down that which is low still lower, and to make wretches desperate: to exalt magistrates into kings, kings into gods; to degrade subjects to the rank of slaves, and slaves to the condition of brutes. The history of mankind is a romance, a mask, a tragedy constructed upon the principles of *poetical justice*; it is a noble or royal hunt, in which what is sport to the few, is death to the many, and in which the spectators halloo and encourage the strong to set upon the weak, and cry havoc in the chase, though they do not share in the spoil. We may depend upon it, that what men delight to read in books, they will put in practice in reality.

Mr. Kemble in the part of Coriolanus was as great as ever. Miss O'Neill as Volumnia was not so great as Mrs. Siddons. There is a *fleshiness*, if we may so say, about her whole manner, voice, and person, which does not suit the character of the Roman Matron. One of the most amusing things in the representation of this play is the contrast between Kemble and little Simmons. The former seems as if he would gibbet the latter on his nose, he looks so lofty. The fidgetting, uneasy, insignificant gestures of Simmons are perhaps a little caricatured; and Kemble's supercilious airs and *nonchalance* remind one of the unaccountable abstracted air, the contracted eye-brows and suspended chin of a man who is just going to sneeze.

THE MAN OF THE WORLD

The Examiner. *Covent-Garden, December 29, 1816.*

Mr. Henry Johnston (from the Glasgow Theatre) who came out some time ago in Sir Archy Mac Sarcasm, with much applause, appeared on Friday, in Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant. During the first acts, he went through this highly, but finely coloured part, with great spirit and force: but in the midst of his account to his son Egerton, of the manner in which he rose in the world by *booing*, and by marrying an old dowager, 'like a surgeon's skeleton in a glass-case,' a certain disapprobation, not of the actor, but of the sentiments of the character, manifested itself through the house, which at this season of the year is not of a very refined composition; and some one cried out from the gallery for 'another play.' So little do the vulgar know of courts and the great world, that they are even shocked and disgusted at the satirical representation of them on the stage. This unexpected interruption given to the actor in the most prominent scene of the play, operated to damp his spirits considerably, nor did he rally completely again for the rest of the evening.

This is the second time that we have seen an actor fail in this character, not by any fault in himself, but by the fault of the Managers, in bringing them out in this part in the holiday season. The other was Mr. Bibby last year, certainly not inferior to Mr. Johnston in the conception or delineation of the sordid, gross, wily Scotchman: but who was equally or more unsuccessful, from the unintelligibility of the Scotch dialect and sentiments to the untutored and 'unclerkly' Christmas visitants. Upon the entrance indeed of Lord Castlereagh and some company of the higher classes, into the Prince's box, Mr. Johnston seemed to recover himself a little, and to appeal with more confidence from the ignorance of the rabble to these more judicious appreciators of the merits of his delineation of Macklin's idea of a modern statesman.

We wonder the Managers of either Theatre ever bring out a comedy relating to the artificial manners of high life, on occasions like the present. They ought either to have a tragedy and a pantomime, or two pantomimes the same evening; or a melo-drama, a puppet-show, and a pantomime. The common people like that which strikes their senses or their imagination: they do not like Comedy, because, if it is genteel, they do not understand the subject matter of which it treats—and if it relates to low manners and incidents, it has no novelty to recommend it. They like the dazzling and the wonderful. One of the objections constantly made by some persons who sat near us in the pit, to the play of the Man of the World, was, that the same scene continued through the whole play. This was a great disappointment to the pantomime appetite for rapid and wonderful changes of scenery, with which our dramatic novices had come fully prepared.

The pantomime, with Mr. Grimaldi, soon brought all to rights, and the audience drank in oblivion of all their grievances with the first tones of their old friend Joe's voice, for which indeed he might be supposed to have a patent. This great man (we really think him the greatest man we saw at the theatre last night) will not 'die and leave the world no copy,' as Shakespear has it, for his son is as like him in person as two peas. The new pantomime itself, or the 'Beggar of Bethnal-green,' is not a very good one. It has a clever dog and a rope-dancing monkey in it. The degeneracy of the modern stage threatens to be shortly redeemed by accomplished recruits from the four-footed creation. The monkey was hissed and encored, but this is the fate of all upstart candidates for popular applause, and we hope that *Monsieur* will console himself for this partial ill-will and prejudice manifested against him, by the reflection that envy is the shadow of merit.—Miss F. Dennett was the

Columbine, and played very prettily as the daughter of the Blind Beggar. But who shall describe the *pas de trois* by the three Miss Dennetts, 'ever charming, ever new,' and yet just the same as when we saw them before, and as we always wish to see them? If they were at all different from what they are, or from one another, it would be for the worse. The charm is in seeing the same grace, the same looks, the same motions, in three persons. They are a lovely reflection of one another. The colours in the rainbow are not more soft and harmonious; the image of the halcyon reflected on the azure bosom of the smiling ocean is not more soft and delightful.

JANE SHORE

The Examiner. *Drury-Lane, January* 5, 1817.

Miss Somerville, who gave so interesting a promise of a fine tragic actress in the part of Imogine in Bertram, last year, appeared the other evening in Alicia in Jane Shore. We do not think Rowe's heroine so well adapted to the display of her powers as that of the modern poet. Miss Somerville is a very delightful sentimental actress, but she makes an indifferent scold. Alicia should be a shrew, and shrill-tongued: but Miss Somerville throws a pensive repentant tone over her bitterest imprecations against her rival, and her mode of recitation is one melancholy cadence of the whole voice, silvered over with sweet gleams of sound, like the moonbeams playing on the heaving ocean. When she should grow sharp and virulent, she only becomes more amiable and romantic, and tries in vain to be disagreeable. Though her voice is out of her controul, she yet succeeds in putting on a peevish dissatisfied look, which yet has too much of a mournful, sanctified cast. If Mr. Coleridge could write a tragedy for her, we should then see the Muse of the romantic drama exhibited in perfection. The fault of Miss Somerville, in short, is, that her delivery is too mannered, and her action without sufficient variety.

Mr. Bengough, as the Duke of Gloster, was in one or two scenes impressive, in others ridiculous. He has a singular kind of awkward energy and heavy animation about him. He works himself up occasionally to considerable force and spirit; and then, as if frightened at his own efforts, his purpose fails him, and he sinks into an unaccountable vein of faltering insipidity. The great merit of Mr. Kean is his thorough decision and self-possession: he always knows what he means to do, and never flinches from doing it.

THE HUMOROUS LIEUTENANT

The Examiner. *January* 26, 1817.

The Humorous Lieutenant, brought out on Saturday week at Covent-Garden, is a bad alteration from one of the most indifferent of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays. It went off very ill, and was as fairly damned as any thing at Covent-Garden could be. They have some *jus theatricum* here, which saves things and carries off appearances. So the play has been brought forward again, and its first failure attributed to the failure of the actress who played the part of Celia. That was certainly a failure, and an unexpected one; for the lady's accomplishments and attractions had been much spoken of, and perhaps justly. Of her talents for the stage, we shall say nothing; for we cannot say a word or syllable in their favour. Nor shall we say any thing against 'The Humorous Lieutenant:' for it passes under the name of Beaumont and Fletcher, 'whose utmost skirts of glory we behold gladly, and far off their steps adore:' and indeed it is at an immeasurable distance, and by a prodigious stretch of faith, that we see them at all in the Covent-Garden *refaccimento.* Mr. Liston plays the heroic Lieutenant in it; but we shall live to see him in the *mock-heroic* again!

TWO NEW BALLETS

The Examiner. *February* 9, 1817.

There have been two new ballets this week, one at each Theatre. That at Drury-Lane, Patrick's Return, is one of the prettiest things we have seen a long time. The dancing and pantomime are very delightfully adapted to a number of old Irish melodies, which we are never tired of hearing.—Zephyr and Flora, at Covent-Garden, is too fine by half for our rude tastes. There are lusty lovers flying in the air, nests of winged Cupids, that start out of bulrushes, trees that lift up their branches like arms:—we suppose they will speak next like Virgil's wood. But in the midst of all these wonders, we have a more amiable wonder, the three Miss Dennetts, as nymphs,

> 'Whom lovely Venus at a birth
> To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore.'

They might represent Love, Hope, and Joy. There is one part in which they seem to dance on the strings of the harp which plays

to them; the liquid sounds and the motion are the same. These young ladies put us in mind of Florizel's praise of Perdita:—

> 'When you do dance, I wish you a wave o' th' sea,
> That you might ever do nothing but that;
> Move still, still so, and own no other function.'

MR. BOOTH'S DUKE OF GLOSTER

The Examiner. *Covent-Garden, February* 16, 1817.

A Gentleman of the name of Booth, who we understand has been acting with considerable applause at Worthing and Brighton, came out in Richard Duke of Gloster, at this Theatre, on Wednesday. We do not know well what to think of his powers, till we see him in some part in which he is more himself. His face is adapted to tragic characters, and his voice wants neither strength nor musical expression. But almost the whole of his performance was an exact copy or parody of Mr. Kean's manner of doing the same part. It was a complete, but at the same time a successful piece of plagiarism. We do not think this kind of second-hand reputation can last upon the London boards for more than a character or two. In the country these *doubles* of the best London performers go down very well, for they are the best they can get, and they have not the originals to make invidious comparisons with. But it will hardly do to bring out the same entertainment that we can have as it is first served up at Drury-Lane, in a hashed state at Covent-Garden. We do not blame Mr. Booth for borrowing Mr. Kean's coat and feathers to appear in upon a first and trying occasion, but if he wishes to gain a permanent reputation, he must come forward in his own person. He must try to be original, and not content himself with treading in another's steps. We say this the rather, because, as far as we could judge, Mr. Booth, in point of execution did those passages the best, in which he now and then took leave of Mr. Kean's decided and extreme manner, and became more mild and tractable. Such was his recitation of the soliloquy on his own ambitious projects, and of that which occurs the night before the battle. In these he seemed to yield to the impulse of his own feelings, and to follow the natural tones and cadence of his voice. They were the best parts of his performance. The worst were those where he imitated, or rather caricatured Mr. Kean's hoarseness of delivery and violence of action, and affected an energy without seeming to feel it. Such were his repulse of Buckingham, his exclamation, 'What does he in the north,' &c. his telling the attendants to set down the corse of King Henry, &c. The scene with Lady Anne, on the contrary, which was of a softer and

more insinuating kind, he was more successful in, and though still a palpable imitation of Mr. Kean, it had all the originality that imitation could have, for he seemed to feel it. His manner of saying 'good night,' and of answering, when he received the anonymous paper, 'A weak invention of the enemy,' we consider as mere tricks in the art, which no one but a professed mimic has a right to play. The dying scene was without effect.—The greatest drawback to Mr. Booth's acting is a perpetual strut, and unwieldy swagger in his ordinary gait and manner, which, though it may pass at Brighton for *grand, gracious, and magnificent*, even the lowest of the mob will laugh at in London. This is the third imitation of Mr. Kean we have seen attempted, and the only one that has not been a complete failure. The imitation of original genius is the *forlorn hope* of the candidates for fame:—its faults are so easily overdone, its graces are so hard to catch. A Kemble school we can understand: a Kean school is, we suspect, a contradiction in terms. Art may be taught, because it is learnt: Nature can neither be taught nor learnt. The secrets of Art may be said to have a common or *pass* key to unlock them; the secrets of Nature have but one master-key—the heart.

Drury-Lane.

The charming afterpiece of Figaro, or the Follies of a Day, has been revived here, and revived with all its gloss and lustre. Miss Kelly, Mrs. Alsop, and Mrs. Orger, were all very happy in it. This play was written by a man who drank light French wines: in every line you see the brisk champaign frothing through green glasses. The beads rise sparkling to the surface and then evaporate. There is nothing in it to remember, and absolutely nothing to criticise; but it is the triumph of animal spirits: while you see it, you seem to drink ether, or to inhale an atmosphere not bred of fogs or sea-coal fires. This is the secret of the charm of Figaro. It promotes the circulation of the blood, and assists digestion. We would by all means advise our readers to go and try the experiment. The best scene in it, is that in which the Page jumps from his concealment behind the arm-chair into the arm-chair itself. The beauty of this is in fact the perfect *heartfelt* indifference to detection; and so of the rest.—We never saw Mr. Rae play better.

MR. BOOTH'S IAGO

The Examiner. *Drury-Lane, February 23, 1817.*

The Managers of Covent-Garden Theatre, after having announced in the bills, that Mr. Booth's Richard the Third had met with a

success unprecedented in the annals of histrionic fame, (which, to do them justice, was not the case), very disinterestedly declined engaging him at more than two pounds a week, as report speaks. Now we think they were wrong, either in puffing him so unmercifully, or in haggling with him so pitifully It was either trifling with the public or with the actor. The consequence, as it has turned out, has been, that Mr. Booth, who was to start as 'the fell opposite' of Mr. Kean, has been taken by the hand by that gentleman, who was an old fellow-comedian of his in the country, and engaged at Drury-Lane at a salary of ten pounds per week. So we hear. And it was in evident allusion to this circumstance, that when Mr. Booth, as Iago, said on Thursday night, 'I know my price no less'—John Bull, who has very sympathetic pockets, gave a loud shout of triumph, which resounded all along the benches of the pit. We must say that Mr. Booth pleased us much more in Iago than in Richard. He was, it is true, well supported by Mr. Kean in Othello, but he also supported him better in that character than any one else we have seen play with him. The two rival actors hunt very well in couple. One thing which we did not expect, and which we think reconciled us to Mr. Booth's imitations, was, that they were here performed in the presence, and as it were with the permission of Mr. Kean. There is no fear of deception in the case. The original is there in person to answer for his identity, and 'give the world assurance of himself.' The original and the copy go together, like the substance and the shadow. But then there neither is nor can be any idea of competition, and so far we are satisfied. In fact, Mr. Booth's Iago was a very close and spirited repetition of Mr. Kean's manner of doing that part. It was indeed the most spirited copy we ever saw upon the stage, considering at the same time the scrupulous exactness with which he adhered to his model in the most trifling *minutiæ*. We need only mention as instances of similarity in the bye-play, Mr. Booth's mode of delivering the lines, 'My wit comes from my brains like birdlime,' or his significant, and we think improper pointing to the dead bodies, as he goes out in the last scene. The same remarks apply to his delivery, that we made last week. He has two voices; one his own, and the other Mr. Kean's. His delineation of Iago is more bustling and animated; Mr. Kean's is more close and cool. We suspect that Mr. Booth is not only a professed and deliberate imitator of Mr. Kean, but that he has in general the cameleon quality (we do not mean that of living upon air, as the Covent-Garden Managers supposed, but) of reflecting all objects that come in contact with him. We occasionally caught the mellow tones of Mr. Macready rising out of the thorough-bass of Mr. Kean's

guttural emphasis, and the flaunting, *degagé* robe of Mr. Young's oriental manner, flying off from the tight vest and tunic of the little 'bony prizer' of the Drury-Lane Company.

Of Mr. Kean's Othello we have not room to speak as it deserves, nor have we the power if we had the room: it is beyond all praise. Any one who has not seen him in the third act of Othello (and seen him near) cannot have an idea of perfect tragic acting.

MR. BOOTH'S RICHARD

The Examiner. *Covent-Garden, March 2, 1817.*

This Theatre was a scene of the greatest confusion and uproar we ever witnessed (not having been present at the O. P. rows) on Tuesday evening, in consequence of the re-appearance of Mr. Booth here, after he had entered into an engagement and performed at Drury-Lane. For our own parts, who are but simple diplomatists, either in theatricals or politics, the resentment and disapprobation of the audience appear to us to have been quite well-founded. The only fault we find with the expression of the public indignation is, that it was directed solely against Mr. Booth, whereas the Managers of the Theatre were entitled to the first and fullest share. Mr. Booth may have been only *their* dupe: they have wilfully trifled with the public, and tried to make a contemptible tool of a person belonging to a profession by which they exist, and from which they derive all their importance with the public. Their only excuse for inveigling an actor whom they refused to engage, from another Theatre where he had been engaged in consequence of such refusal, is, that by the rules of theatrical proceeding, one theatre has no right to engage an actor who has been in *treaty* for an engagement at the other, within a year after the breaking off of such treaty, without leave of the Managers. First, it appears that no such understanding exists, or is acted upon: that the pretext, as a mere pretext, is not true: secondly, such a mutual understanding, if it did exist, would be most unjust to the profession, and an insult to the public. For at this rate, any Manager, by once entering into an agreement with an actor, may keep him dangling on his good pleasure for a year certain, may prevent his getting any other engagement, by saying that they are still in a progress of arrangement, though all arrangement is broken off, may deprive an ingenious and industrious man of his bread, and the public of the advantage of his talents, till the Managers, at the expiration of this probationary year of non-performance, once more grant him his *Habeas Corpus*, and release him from the restrictions and obligations

of his non-engagement. The obvious questions for the public to decide are these: Why, having announced Mr. Booth as a prodigy of success after his first appearance in Richard, the Managers declined to give Mr. Booth any but a very paltry salary? In this they either deceived the town, or acted with injustice to Mr. Booth, because they thought him in their power. Why, the instant he was engaged at the other Theatre at a handsome salary, and on his own terms, and had played there with success, they wanted to have him back, employed threats as it should seem to induce him to return, and gave him a larger salary than he had even obtained at Drury-Lane? Whether, if he had not been engaged at the other theatre, they would have engaged him at their own upon the terms to which they have agreed to entice him back? Whether, in short, in the whole proceeding, they have had any regard either to professional merit, or to public gratification, or to any thing but their own cunning and self-interest? The questions for Mr. Booth to answer are, why, after his treatment by the Covent-Garden Company, he applied to the Drury-Lane Company; and why, after their liberal behaviour, he deserted back again, on the first overture, to the company that had discarded him? Why he did not act on Saturday night, if he was able: or at any rate, state, to prevent the charge of duplicity, his new engagement with his old benefactors? Whether, if Mr. Booth had not made this new arrangement, he would not have acted in spite of indisposition or weak nerves? Lastly, whether the real motive which led Mr. Booth to fall in so unadvisedly with the renewed and barefaced proposals of the Covent-Garden Company, was not the renewed hope dawning in his breast, of still signalising himself, by dividing the town with Mr. Kean, instead of playing a second part to him, which is all he could ever hope to do on the same theatre? But enough of this disagreeable and disgraceful affair. The only way to make it up with the public would be, as we are convinced, not by attempts at vindication, but by an open apology.

Drury-Lane.

The new farce of Frightened to Death, is the most amusing and original piece of invention that we have seen for a long time. The execution might be better, but the idea is good, and as far as we know, perfectly new. Harley, Jack Phantom, in a drunken bout, is beaten by the watch, and brought senseless to the house of his mistress, Mrs. Orger, who, in order to cure him of his frolics, determines to dress him up in an old wrapping-gown like a shroud, and persuade him that he is dead. When he awakes, he at first does

not recollect where he is: the first thing he sees is a letter from his friend to his mistress, giving an account of his sad catastrophe, and speaking of the manner in which order is to be taken for his burial. Soon after, his mistress and her maid come in in mourning, lament over his loss, and as has been agreed beforehand, take no notice of Phantom, who in vain presents himself before them, and thus is made to personate his own ghost. The servant, Mumps (Mr. Knight), who is in the secret, also comes in, and staggers Phantom's belief in his own identity still more, by neither seeing nor hearing him. The same machinery is played off upon him in a different mood by Munden's coming in, and taking him for a ghost. A very laughable dialogue and duet here take place between the Ghost and the Ghost-seer, the latter inquiring of him with great curiosity about his ancestors in the other world, and being desirous to cultivate an acquaintance with the living apparition, in the hope of obtaining some insight into the state of that state 'from which no traveller returns.' There was a foolish song about 'Kisses' at the beginning, which excited some little displeasure, but the whole went off with great and deserved applause.

DOUBLE GALLANT

The Examiner. *Drury-Lane, April* 13, 1817.

Cibber's Comedy of the Double Gallant has been revived at this Theatre with considerable success. Pope did Cibber a great piece of injustice, when he appointed him to receive the crown of dulness. It was mere spleen in Pope; and the provocation to it seems to have been an excess of flippant vivacity in the constitution of Cibber. That Cibber's Birth-day Odes were dull, seems to have been the common fault of the subject, rather than a particular objection to the poet. In his Apology for his own Life, he is one of the most amusing of coxcombs; happy in conscious vanity, teeming with animal spirits, uniting the self-sufficiency of youth with the garrulity of age; and in his plays he is not less entertaining and agreeably familiar with the audience. His personal character predominates indeed over the inventiveness of his muse; but so far from being dull, he is every where light, fluttering, and airy. We could wish we had a few more such dull fellows; they would contribute to make the world pass away more pleasantly! Cibber, in short, though his name has been handed down to us as a bye-word of impudent pretension by the classical pen of his rival, who did not admit of any merit beyond the narrow circle of wit and friendship in which he moved, was a

gentleman and a scholar of the old school; a man of wit and pleasantry in conversation; an excellent actor; an admirable dramatic critic; and one of the best comic writers of his age. Instead of being a *caput mortuum* of literature, (always excepting what is always to be excepted, his Birth-day Odes), he had a vast deal of its spirit, and too much of the froth. But the eye of ill-nature or prejudice, which is attracted by the shining points of character in others, generally transposes their good qualities, and absurdly denies them the very excellences which excite its chagrin.—Cibber's Careless Husband is a master-piece of easy gaiety; and his Double Gallant, though it cannot rank in the first, may take its place in the second class of comedies. It is full of character, bustle, and stage-effect. It belongs to the composite style, and very happily mixes up the comedy of intrigue, such as we see it in Mrs. Centlivre's Spanish plots, with a tolerable share of the wit and sentiment of Congreve and Vanburgh. As there is a good deal of wit, there is a spice of wickedness in this play, which was the privilege of the good old style of comedy, when vice, perhaps from being less common, was less catching than it is at present. It was formerly a thing more to be wondered at than imitated; and behind the rigid barriers of religion and morality might be exposed freely, without the danger of any serious practical consequences; but now that the safeguards of wholesome prejudices are removed, we seem afraid to trust our eyes or ears with a single situation or expression of a loose tendency, as if the mere mention of licentiousness implied a conscious approbation of it, and the extreme delicacy of our moral sense would be debauched by the bare suggestion of the possibility of vice. The luscious vein of the dialogue in many of the scenes is stopped short in the revived play, though not before we perceive its object—

————'In hidden mazes running,
With wanton haste and giddy cunning!'

We noticed more than one of these *double meanings*, which however passed off without any marks of reprobation, for unless they are made pretty broad, the audience, from being accustomed to the cautious purity of the modern drama, are not very expert in decyphering the equivocal allusion.—All the characters in the Double Gallant are very well kept up, and they were most of them well supported in the representation. At-All and Lady Dainty are the two most prominent characters in the original comedy, and those into which Cibber has put most of his own nature and genius. They are the essence of active impertinence and sickly affectation. At-All has three intrigues upon his hands at once, and manages them all with the dexterity with

which an adept shuffles a pack of cards. His cool impudence is equal to his wonderful vivacity. He jumps, by mere volubility of tongue and limbs, under three several names into three several assignations with three several *incognitas*, whom he meets at the same house, as they happen to be mutual friends. He would succeed with them all, but that he is detected by them all round, and then he can hardly be said to fail, for he carries off the best of them at last (Mrs. Mardyn), who not being able to seduce him from her rivals by any other means, resorts to a disguise, and vanquishes him in love by disarming him in a duel. The scene in which At-All, who had made love to Clorinda as Colonel Standfast, is introduced to her by her cousin (who is also in love with him) as Mr. Freeman, and while he is disowning his personal identity, is surprised by the arrival of Lady Sadlife, to whom he had been making the same irresistible overtures, is one of the best *coup d'œils* of the theatre we have seen for a long time. Harley acts this character laughably, but not very judiciously. He bustles through it with the liveliness of a footman, not with the manners of a gentleman. He never changes his character with his dress, but still he is a pleasant fellow in himself, and is so happy in the applause he receives, that we are sorry to find any fault with him. Mrs. Alsop's Lady Dainty was a much better, but a much less agreeable piece of acting. The affected sensibility, the pretended disorders, the ridiculous admiration of novelty, and the languid caprices of this character, were given by the actress with an overpowering truth of effect. The mixture of folly, affectation, pride, insensibility, and spleen which constitute the character of the fine lady, as it existed in the days of Cibber, and is delineated in this comedy, is hardly to be tolerated in itself, with every advantage of grace, youth, beauty, dress, and fashion. But Mrs. Alsop gave only the inherent vice and ridiculous folly of the character, without any external accomplishments to conceal or adorn it. She has always the same painful 'frontlet' on: the same uneasy expression of face and person. Her affected distortions seemed to arise from real pain; nor was her delight in mischief and absurdity counteracted by any palliating circumstances of elegance or beauty. A character of this description ought *only* to appeal to the understanding, and not to offend the senses. We do not know how to soften this censure; but we will add, that Mrs. Alsop, in all her characters, shews sense, humour, and spirit.

Dowton and Miss Kelly, as Sir Solomon Sadlife and Wishwell, are two for a pair. We do not wish to see a better actor or actress. The effect which both these performers produce, is the best and strongest that can be, because they never try to produce an effect.

Their style of acting is the reverse of grimace or caricature. They never overcharge or force any thing, and their humour is so much the more irresistible in its appeal, as it seems to come from them in spite of themselves. Instead of wanting to shew their talents to the audience, they seem hardly conscious of them themselves. All their excellence is natural, unaffected, involuntary. When the sense of absurdity is so strong that it cannot be contained any longer, it bursts out; and the expression of their feelings commands our sympathy, because they do not appear to court it. Their nature is downright sturdy, sterling, good old English nature, that is, the sort of nature that we like best. In the present play, it is hard to determine which is the best—Miss Kelly's sulky suppressed abigail airs as Wishwell, her adroit irony and contemptuous expression of pity for Sir Solomon's credulity, or Dowton's deliberate manner of digesting his disgraces, chewing the cud of his misfortunes, and pocketting up his branching horns, in the latter character. Wishwell's tingling fingers, uplifted eyes, pouting mouth, bridling chin, and Sir Solomon's bronzed face, curling lips, blank looks, nods, winks, and shrugs, told their own story and kept their own secret (to themselves), as well as heart could wish. We have a stronger relish for this kind of dry pungent humour, than we have for the taste of olives.

The Inn-keeper's Daughter is a melo-drame founded on Mr. Southey's ballad of Mary the Maid of the Inn. The ballad is better than the melo-drame. The interest of the story is less in the latter, and the machinery is complicated, and moves slow.

Robinson Crusoe, the new melo-drame at Covent-Garden, is *not* the old favourite with the public. It has not the striking incident of the notched post, nor of the print of a human footstep in the sand; but there is a poodle dog in it, and innumerable savages, English and Caribbee.

DON JUAN

The Examiner. *King's Theatre, April* 20, 1817.

Mozart's celebrated Opera of Don Juan has been brought forward at this Theatre with every attraction, and with all the success which could be anticipated. The house was crowded to excess on Saturday week (the day of its being first brought out): on Tuesday it was but thinly attended. Why was this? Was it because the first representation did not answer the expectation of the public? No; but

because Saturday is the fashionable day for going to the Opera, and Tuesday is not. On Saturday, therefore, the English are a musical public; and on Tuesday they are not a musical public: on Saturday they are all rapture and enthusiasm; and on Tuesday they are all coldness and indifference,—impose a periodical penance on themselves for the plenary indulgence of their last week's ecstacies, and have their ears hermetically sealed to the charms of modulated sounds. Yet the writer of the preface to the translation of Don Juan assures us, that 'the people of this country who frequent the Opera, are inferior to those of no other nation in their taste for fine music.' That may be so. But still we doubt, if Don Juan, 'the matchless work of its immortalized author,' had been presented to the English public for the first time on Saturday week, without those wonderful helps to public taste and discernment, the name and reputation of the composer, whether it would have met with any better success than it did in Prague in 1787, or at Paris some years after, and whether we might not have had to observe of its representation at the King's Theatre, as Gerat, the singer, did of its representation at the *Academie de Musique; Don Juan a paru incognito à l'Opera!* The only convincing proof that the public, either in this country or on the Continent, are become more alive to 'the refined and intellectual music' of Don Giovanni than they were thirty years ago, is—that the author is dead.

What inclines us the more to believe that the admiration of Mozart's music in this instance is more a thing of rote than the consequence of any general feeling on the subject, is, that we hear of nothing but the sublimity and Shakespearian character of Don Juan. Now we confess that, with the single exception of the Ghost scene, we not only do not feel any such general character of grand or strongly-contrasted expression pervading the composition, but we do not see any opportunity for it. Except the few words put into the mouth of the great Commander (Don Pedro) either as the horseman ghost, or the spectre-guest of Don Juan, which break upon the ear with a sort of awful murmur, like the sound of the last trumpet ringing in the hollow chambers of the dead, but which yet are so managed, that 'airs from heaven' seem mingled with 'blasts from hell,' the rest of the Opera is scarcely any thing but gaiety, tenderness, and sweetness, from the first line to the last. To be sure, the part of the great Commander is a striking and lofty catastrophe to the piece; he does in some sort assume a voice of stern authority, which puts an end to the mirth, the dancing, the love and feasting, and drowns the sounds of the pipe, the lute, and the guitar, in a burst of rattling thunder; but even this thunder falls

and is caught among its own echoes, that soften while they redouble the sound, and by its distant and varied accompaniment, soothes as much as it startles the ear. This short episode, which is included in four or five sentences printed in capital letters, is the only part of the opera which aims at the tragic: this part is not of a pure or unmixed species, but is very properly harmonised with the rest of the composition, by middle and reflected tones; and all the other scenes are of one uniform, but exquisite character, a profusion of delicate airs and graces. Except, then, where the author reluctantly gives place to the Ghost-statue, or rather compromises matters with him, this opera is Mozart all over; it is no more like Shakespear, than Claude Lorraine is like Rubens or Michael Angelo. It is idle to make the comparison. The personal character of the composer's mind, a light, airy, voluptuous spirit, is infused into every line of it; the intoxication of pleasure, the sunshine of hope, the dancing of the animal spirits, the bustle of action, the sinkings of tenderness and pity, are there, but nothing else. It is a kind of scented music; the ear imbibes an aromatic flavour from the sounds. It is like the breath of flowers; the sighing of balmy winds; or Zephyr with Flora playing; or the liquid notes of the nightingale wafted to the bosom of the bending rose. To show at once our taste or the want of it, the song of 'La ci darem' gives us, we confess, both in itself, and from the manner in which it is sung by Madame Fodor, more pleasure than all the rest of the opera put together. We could listen to this air for ever—with certain intervals: the first notes give a throb of expectation to the heart, the last linger on the sense. We *encore* it greedily, with a sort of childish impatience for new delight, and drink in the ethereal sounds, like draughts of earthly nectar. The heart is intoxicated through the ear; and feels in the tremulous accents of Zerlina's voice, all the varying emotions of tenderness, of doubt, of regret, and giddy rapture, as she resigns herself to her new lover. Madame Fodor's execution of her part of this duet was excellent. There is a clear, firm, silvery tone in her voice, like the reverberation of a tight-strung instrument, which by its contrast gives a peculiar effect to the more melting and subdued expression of particular passages, and which accords admirably with the idea of high health and spirits in the rustic character of Zerlina. We are tempted to say of her in this character, what Spenser says of Belphebe,

'——And when she spake,
Sweet words like dropping honey she did shed,
And 'twixt the pearls and rubies softly brake
A silver sound, that heav'nly music seem'd to make.'

She was less successful in the execution of the song to Massetto just after, 'Batte, batte, Massetto:' for she seemed to sing it as if she had hardly learned it by heart. To this, however, she gave a characteristic simplicity of expression; she appeared in the first part as if she would willingly stand like a lamb, *come agnellina*, to be beaten by her provoked lover, and afterwards, when she is reconciled to him, as if she was glad she had escaped a beating. Her song, *Vedrai carino*, promising him a remedy, when Massetto himself gets beaten, by offering him her heart, was charming, both from the execution of the air, and from the action with which she accompanied it.

Of the other performers we cannot speak so favourably. Signor Ambrogetti gave considerable life and spirit to the part of Don Giovanni; but we neither saw the dignified manners of the Spanish nobleman, nor the insinuating address of the voluptuary. He makes too free and violent a use of his legs and arms. He sung the air, *Finche dal vino*, in which he anticipates an addition to his list of mistresses from the success of his entertainment, with a sort of jovial turbulent vivacity, but without the least 'sense of amorous delight.' His only object seemed to be, to sing the words as loud and as fast as possible. Nor do we think he gave to Don Juan's serenade, *Deh vieni alla finestra*, any thing like the spirit of fluttering apprehension and tenderness which characterises the original music. Signor Ambrogetti's manner of acting in this scene was that of the successful and significant intriguer, but not of an intriguer—in love. Sensibility should be the ground-work of the expression: the cunning and address are only accessories.

Naldi's Laporello was much admired, and it was not without its merits, though we cannot say that it gave us much pleasure. His humour is coarse and boisterous, and is more that of a buffoon than a comic actor. He treats the audience with the same easy cavalier airs that an impudent waiter at a French table-d'hôte does the guests as they arrive. The gross familiarity of his behaviour to Donna Elvira, in the song where he makes out the list of his master's mistresses, was certainly not in character; nor is there any thing in the words or the music to justify it. The tone and air which he should assume are those of pretended sympathy, mixed with involuntary laughter, not of wanton undisguised insult.

Signor Crivelli and Madame Camporese did not add any particular prominence to the serious parts of Don Octavio, and Donna Anna. Signora Hughes's Donna Elvira was successful beyond what we could have supposed. This lady at the Italian Opera is respectable: on the English stage she was formidable. Signor Angrisani *doubles*

the part of Massetto and the Ghost. In the former, he displayed much drollery and *naiveté*; and in the latter, he was as solemn, terrific, and mysterious as a ghost should be. A new translation accompanies the Opera House edition of Don Giovanni. It is very well executed. But as it is not in verse, it might have been more literal, without being less elegant.

THE CONQUEST OF TARANTO

The Examiner. *Covent Garden, April 27, 1817.*

The Conquest of Taranto continues to be acted here with a success proportionate to its merits. It is from the pen of Mr. Dimond, whose productions are well known to the public, and which have so strong a family-likeness, that from having seen any one of them, we may form a tolerably correct idea of the rest. *Ex uno omnes.* His pieces have upon the whole been exceedingly popular, and we think deservedly so; for they have all the merit that belongs to the style of the drama to which he has devoted his talents,—a style which is a great favourite with an immense majority of the play-going public. This style may be called the *purely romantic*; there is little or nothing classical in it. The author does not profess to provide a public entertainment at his own entire expence, and from his own proper funds, but contracts with the managers to get up a striking and impressive exhibition in conjunction with the scene-painter, the scene-shifter, the musical composer, the orchestra, the chorusses on the stage, and the *lungs* of the actors! It is a kind of *pic-nic* contribution, to which we sit down with a good appetite, and from which we come away quite satisfied, though our attention is somewhat distracted in the multitude of objects to which our gratitude is due for the pleasure we have received. The art of the romantic dramatist seems to be, to put ordinary characters in extraordinary situations, and to blend common-place sentiments with picturesque scenery. The highest pathos is ushered in, and the mind prepared to indulge in all the luxury of woe, by the chaunting of music behind the scenes, as the blowing up of a mine of gunpowder gives the finishing stroke to the progress of the passions. The approach of a hero is announced by a blast of trumpets; the flute and flageolet breathe out the whole soul of the lover. Mr. Dimond is by no means jealous of the exclusive honours of the Tragic Muse; he is not at all disposed to make a monopoly of wit, genius, or reputation: he minds little but the conducting of his story to the end of the third act, and loses no

opportunity of playing the game into the hands of his theatrical associates, so that they may supply his deficiencies, and all together produce a perfect piece. In the Conquest of Taranto the scene lies almost the whole time upon the beautiful sea-coast of Spain, and we do not feel the lack of descriptive poetry, while the eye is regaled with one continued panorama. In a word, the author resembles those painters of history who pay more attention to their back-ground than their figures, to costume and drapery than to the expression of thought and sentiment.

The romantic drama, such as we have here described it, admits of various gradations, from the point where it unites with the pure tragic down to the melo-drame, and speaking pantomime, nor do we think that as it descends lower in its pretensions, its interest necessarily grows less. Where the regular drama studiously avails itself of the assistance of other arts, as painting and music, where the dialogue becomes the vehicle for connecting scenery, pantomime, and song in one dazzling and overpowering appeal to all our different faculties and senses, we are satisfied if the *tout ensemble* produces its effect, and do not enquire whether the work of the author alone, in a literary point of view, is proof against criticism. He is supposed to write for the stage 'with all appliances and means to boot,' not for the loneliness of the closet, and is little more than the ballet-master of the scene. He is not to enter into a competition with his assistants in the several departments of his art, but to avail himself of their resources. In the division of labour it is ridiculous to expect the same person to do the whole work. This would be double toil and trouble, and would, besides, answer no end. An appeal to the understanding or the imagination is superfluous, where the senses are assailed on all sides. What is the use of painting a landscape twice—to the ear as well as to the eye? What signify 'the golden cadences of verse,' when only employed to usher in a song? The gleams of wit or fancy glimmer but feebly on a stage blazing with phosphorus; and surely the Tragic Muse need not strain her voice so deep or high, while a poodle dog is barking fit to break his heart, in the most affecting part of the performance. We cannot attend to sounding epithets while a castle is tumbling about our ears, and it is sufficiently alarming to see an infant thrown from a precipice or hanging bridge into the foaming waves—reflections apart. Common-place poetry is good enough as an accompaniment to all this; as very indifferent words are equally well set to the finest tunes.—So far then from joining in the common cry against Mr. Dimond's poetry as not rising above mediocrity, we should be sorry if he wrote better than he does. And what confirms us in this sentiment is, that those

who have tried to do better have succeeded worse. The most ambitious writers of the modern romantic drama are Mr. Coleridge and Mr. Maturin. But in the Remorse of the one, all Mr. Coleridge's metaphysics are lost in moonshine; and in Bertram and Don Manuel, the genius of poetry crowned with faded flowers, and seated on the top of some high Gothic battlement, in vain breathes its votive accents amidst the sighing of the forest gale and the vespers of midnight monks. But enough of this.

There is considerable interest in the outline of the present play, and the events are ingeniously and impressively connected together, so as to excite and keep alive curiosity, and to produce striking situations. But to this production of external effect, character and probability are repeatedly sacrificed, and the actions which the different persons are made to perform, like stage-puppets, have no adequate motives. For instance, it is quite out of our common calculation of human nature, that Valencia (Mr. Macready) should betray his country to an enemy, because he is jealous of a rival in love; nor is there any thing in the previous character of Valencia to lead us to expect such an extreme violation of common sense and decency. Again, Rinaldo is betrayed to his dishonour, by acting contrary to orders and to his duty as a knight, at the first insidious suggestion of Valencia. The entrance of the Moors through the subterranean passage, and the blowing up of the palace while the court are preparing to give a sort of *fête champêtre* in the middle of a siege, is not only surprising but ridiculous. Great praise is due to Mr. Young as Aben Hamet, to Mr. Macready as Valencia, and to Mr. Booth as Rinaldo, for the force of their action, and the audibleness of their delivery:—perhaps for something more.—Miss Stephens, as Oriana's maid, sang several songs very prettily.

THE TOUCH-STONE

The Examiner. *Drury-Lane, May* 11, 1817.

Mr. Kenney's new Comedy called the Touch-stone, or the World as it goes, has been acted here with great success. It possesses much liveliness and pleasantry in the incidents, and the dialogue is neat and pointed. The interest never flags, and is never wound up to a painful pitch. There are several *coups de théatre*, which shew that Mr. Kenney is an adept in his art, and has the stage and the actors before him while he is writing in his closet. The character of Dinah Cropley, which is admirably sustained by Miss Kelly, is the chief attraction of the piece. The author has contrived situations

for this pretty little rustic, which bring out the exquisite *naiveté* and simple pathos of the actress in as great a degree as we ever saw them. Mr. Kenney, we understand, wrote this Comedy abroad; and there is a foreign air of homely contentment and natural gaiety about the character of poor Dinah, like the idea we have of Marivaux's *Paysanne parvenue*. She seemed to have fed her chickens and turned her spinning-wheel in France, under more genial and better-tempered skies. Perhaps, however, this may be a mere prejudice in our minds, arising from our having lately seen Miss Kelly in such characters taken from French pieces. Her lover, Harley, (Peregrine Paragon), is of undoubted home growth. He is a very romantic, generous, amorous sort of simpleton, while he is poor; and for want of knowing better, thinks himself incorruptible, till temptation falls in his way, and then he turns out a very knave: and only saves his credit in the end by one of those *last act* repentances which are more pleasing than probable. He is in the first instance a poor country schoolmaster, who is engaged to marry Dinah Cropley, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer. They cannot, however, obtain the consent of their landlord and his sister (Holland and Mrs. Harlowe), the one a town coquette, the other a commercial gambler; when just in the nick of time, news is brought that Holland is ruined by the failure of an extravagant speculation, and that a distant relation has left his whole fortune to Harley. The tables are now turned. Harley buys the mansion-house, furniture, and gardens, takes possession of them with highly amusing airs of upstart vanity and self-importance; is flattered by the Squire's sister, who discards and is discarded by a broken fortune-hunting lover of the name of Garnish (Wallack), makes proposals of marriage to her, and thinks no more of his old favourite Dinah. Garnish in the mean time finding the pliability of temper of Peregrine Paragon, Esq., and to make up for his disappointment in his own fortune-hunting scheme, sends for his sister (Mrs. Alsop) whom he introduces to the said Peregrine Paragon. The forward pretensions of the two new candidates for his hand, form an amusing contrast with the sanguine hopes and rejected addresses of the old possessor of his heart, and some very ridiculous scenes take place, with one very affecting one, in which Miss Kelly makes a last vain appeal to her lover's fidelity, and (Oxberry) her father watches the result with a mute wonderment and disappointed expectation infinitely natural, and well worth any body's seeing. By-and-bye it turns out that the fortune has been left not to Harley, but by a subsequent will to Miss Kelly, who is also a relation of the deceased, when instantly his two accomplished mistresses give over their persecution of him, their two brothers

set off to make love to the new heiress, who exposes them both to the ridicule they deserve, and Harley, without knowing of the change of fortune, is moved by a letter he receives from her, to repent just in time to prove himself not altogether unworthy of her hand.

Such is the outline of this Comedy. Dowton acts the part of a friendly mediator, and spectator in the scene; and Hughes makes a very fit representative of a shuffling, officious, pettifogging attorney. The most unpleasant part of the play was the undisguised mercenary profligacy of the four characters of Wallack, Holland, Mrs. Alsop, and Mrs. Harlowe: and a precious *partie quarrée* they are. The scrapes into which their folly and cunning lead them are, however, very amusing, and their unprincipled selfishness is very deservedly punished at last.

THE LIBERTINE

The Examiner. *Covent Garden, May 25, 1817.*

The Libertine, an after-piece altered from Shadwell's play of that name, and founded on the story of Don Juan, with Mozart's music, was represented here on Tuesday evening. Almost every thing else was against it, but the music triumphed. Still it had but half a triumph, for the songs were not *encored*; and when an attempt was made by some rash over-weening enthusiasts to *encore* the enchanting airs of Mozart, that heavy German composer, 'that dull Beotian genius,' as he has been called by a lively verbal critic of our times, the English, disdaining this insult offered to our native talents, *hissed*—in the plenitude of their pampered grossness, and 'ignorant impatience' of foreign refinement and elegance, they hissed! We believe that unconscious patriotism has something to do with this as well as sheer stupidity: they think that a real taste for the Fine Arts, unless they are of British growth and manufacture, is a sign of disaffection to the Government, and that there must be 'something rotten in the state of Denmark,' if their ears, as well as their hearts, are not true English. We have heard sailors' songs by Little Smith, and Yorkshire songs by Emery, and the Death of Nelson by Mr. Sinclair, *encored* again and again at Covent-Garden, so as almost 'to split the ears of the groundlings,' yet the other night they would not hear of *encoring* Miss Stephens, either in the Duet with Duruset, *La ci darem*, nor in the song appealing for his forgiveness, *Batte, Massetto*; yet at the Opera they tolerate Madame Fodor in repeating both these

songs, because they suppose it to be the etiquette, and would have you believe that they do not very warmly insist on the repetition of the last song she sings there, out of tenderness to the actress, not to spare their own ears, which are soon cloyed with sweetness, and delight in nothing but noise and fury.

We regard Miss Stephens's Zerlina as a failure, whether we compare her with Madame Fodor in the same part, or with herself in other parts. She undoubtedly sung her songs with much sweetness and simplicity, but her simplicity had something of insipidity in it; her tones wanted the fine, rich, *pulpy* essence of Madame Fodor's, the elastic impulse of health and high animal spirits; nor had her manner of giving the different airs that laughing, careless grace which gives to Madame Fodor's singing all the ease and spirit of conversation. There was some awkwardness necessarily arising from the transposition of the songs, particularly of the duet between Zerlina and Don Giovanni, which was given to Massetto, because Mr. Charles Kemble is not a singer, and which by this means lost its exquisite appropriateness of expression. Of Mr. Duruset's Massetto we shall only say, that it is not so good as Angrisani's. He would however have made a better representative of the statue of Don Pedro than Mr. Chapman, who is another gentleman who has not 'a singing face,' and whom it would therefore have been better to leave out of the Opera than the songs; particularly than that fine one, answering to *Di rider finira pria della Aurora*, which Mr. Chapman was mounted on horseback on purpose, it should seem, *neither to sing nor say*!

Mr. Charles Kemble did not play the Libertine well. Instead of the untractable, fiery spirit, the unreclaimable licentiousness of Don Giovanni, he was as tame as any saint;

'And of his port as meek as is a maid.'

He went through the different exploits of wickedness assigned him with evident marks of reluctance and contrition; and it seemed the height of injustice that so well meaning a young man, forced into acts of villainy against his will, should at last be seized upon as their lawful prize by fiends come hot from hell with flaming torches, and that he should sink into a lake of burning brimstone on a splendid car brought to receive him by the devil, in the likeness of a great dragon, writhing round and round upon a wheel of fire—an exquisite device of the Managers, superadded to the original story, and in striking harmony with Mozart's music! Mr. Liston's Leporello was not quite what we wished it. He played it in a mixed style between a burlesque imitation of the Italian Opera, and his own *inimitable*

manner. We like him best when he is his own great original, and copies only himself—

'None but himself can be his parallel.'

He did not sing the song of Madamira half so well, nor with half the impudence of Naldi. Indeed, all the performers seemed, instead of going their lengths on the occasion, to be upon their good behaviour, and instead of entering into their parts, to be thinking of the comparison between themselves and the performers at the Opera. We cannot say it was in their favour.

BARBAROSSA

The Examiner. *Drury-Lane, June* 1, 1817.

Mr. Kean had for his benefit on Monday, Barbarossa, and the musical after-piece of Paul and Virginia. In the tragedy there was nothing for him to do, and it is only when there is nothing for him to do, that he does nothing. The scene in which he throws off his disguise as a slave, and declares himself to be Achmet, the heir to the throne, which Barbarossa has usurped by the murder of his father, was the only one of any effect. We are sorry that Mr. Kean repeats this character *till further notice.* In Paul we liked him exceedingly: but we should have liked him better, if he had displayed fewer of the graces and intricacies of the art. The tremulous deliberation with which he introduced some of these ornamental flourishes, put us a little in mind of the perplexity of the lover in the Tatler, who was at a loss in addressing his mistress whether he should say,

'—And when your song you sing,
Your song you sing with so much art,'

Or,

'—And when your song you sing,
You sing your song with so much art.'

As Mr. Bickerstaff, who was applied to by the poet, declined deciding on this nice point, so we shall not decide whether Mr. Kean sung well or ill, but leave it to be settled by the connoisseurs and the ladies. His voice is clear, full, and sweet to a degree of tenderness. Miss Mangeon played Virginia, and in so doing, did not spoil one of the most pleasing recollections of our boyish reading days, which we have still treasured up 'in our heart's core, aye, in our best of hearts.'

MRS. SIDDONS'S LADY MACBETH

The Examiner. *Covent-Garden, June 8, 1817.*

Mrs. Siddons's appearance in Lady Macbeth at this Theatre on Thursday, drew immense crowds to every part of the house. We should suppose that more than half the number of persons were compelled to return without gaining admittance. We succeeded in gaining a seat in one of the back-boxes, and saw this wonderful performance at a distance, and consequently at a disadvantage. Though the distance of place is a disadvantage to a performance like Mrs. Siddons's Lady Macbeth, we question whether the distance of time at which we have formerly seen it is any. It is nearly twenty years since we first saw her in this character, and certainly the impression which we have still left on our minds from that first exhibition, is stronger than the one we received the other evening. The sublimity of Mrs. Siddons's acting is such, that the first impulse which it gives to the mind can never wear out, and we doubt whether this original and paramount impression is not weakened, rather than strengthened, by subsequent repetition. We do not read the tragedy of the Robbers twice; if we have seen Mrs. Siddons in Lady Macbeth only once, it is enough. The impression is stamped there for ever, and any after-experiments and critical enquiries only serve to fritter away and tamper with the sacredness of the early recollection. We see into the details of the character, its minute excellencies or defects, but the great masses, the gigantic proportions, are in some degree lost upon us by custom and familiarity. It is the first blow that staggers us; by gaining time we recover our self-possession. Mrs. Siddons's Lady Macbeth is little less appalling in its effects than the apparition of a preternatural being; but if we were accustomed to see a preternatural being constantly, our astonishment would by degrees diminish.

We do not know whether it is owing to the cause here stated, or to a falling-off in Mrs. Siddons's acting, but we certainly thought her performance the other night inferior to what it used to be. She speaks too slow, and her manner has not that decided, sweeping majesty, which used to characterise her as the Muse of Tragedy herself. Something of apparent indecision is perhaps attributable to the circumstance of her only acting at present on particular occasions. An actress who appears only once a-year cannot play so well as if she was in the habit of acting once a-week. We therefore wish Mrs. Siddons would either return to the stage, or retire from it altogether. By her present uncertain wavering between public and private life, she may diminish her reputation, while she can add nothing to it.

MR. MAYWOOD'S SHYLOCK

The Times. *Drury-Lane, September* 26, 1817.

Mr. Maywood, from the Theatre Royal Glasgow, of whom report had spoken highly, and we think not undeservedly so, appeared here in the part of Shylock. He was received throughout with very great applause; nor was there any part of his performance at which the slightest disapprobation was expressed. His figure is rather short; his face, though not regularly formed, expressive; his voice full, and capable of great depth of intonation; his attitudes firm and well conceived: the most spirited scene, we thought, was that in which Tubal brings him information of Antonio's losses and impending ruin, and of his daughter's waste of his money. His exclamation, 'Thank God! thank God!' on hearing of the shipwreck, was as animated as any thing we ever heard. In the last scene, the glare of malignity with which he eyed Antonio after his defeated revenge recoils upon his own head, was truly terrific. Upon the whole, we consider this gentleman as an acquisition to the tragic strength of the theatre; and are persuaded that what seemed the principal defect in his performance, an occasional want of decision of tone, and firmness of action, was attributable only to that diffidence which is natural to a young actor on his first appearance before a London audience, in a part of so much prominence, and which has been so ably filled of late.

MR. KEMBLE'S RETIREMENT

The Times. *Covent-Garden, June* 25, 1817.

Mr. Kemble took his leave of the Stage on Monday night, in the character of Coriolanus. On his first coming forward to pronounce his Farewell Address, he was received with a shout like thunder: on his retiring after it, the applause was long before it subsided entirely away. There is something in these partings with old public favourites exceedingly affecting. They teach us the shortness of human life, and the vanity of human pleasures. Our associations of admiration and delight with theatrical performers, are among our earliest recollections—among our last regrets. They are links that connect the beginning and the end of life together; *their* bright and giddy career of popularity measures the arch that spans our brief existence. It is near twenty years ago since we first saw Mr. Kemble in the same character — yet how short the interval seems! The impression appears as distinct as if it were of yesterday. In fact, intellectual objects, in proportion as they are lasting, may be said to shorten life. Time has no effect upon them. The petty and the

personal, that which appeals to our senses and our interests, is by degrees forgotten, and fades away into the distant obscurity of the past. The grand and the ideal, that which appeals to the imagination, can only perish with it, and remains with us, unimpaired in its lofty abstraction, from youth to age; as, wherever we go, we still see the same heavenly bodies shining over our heads! We forget numberless things that have happened to ourselves, one generation of follies after another; but not the first time of our seeing Mr. Kemble, nor shall we easily forget the last! Coriolanus, the character in which he took his leave of the Stage, was one of the first in which we remember to have seen him; and it was one in which we were not sorry to part with him, for we wished to see him appear like himself to the last. Nor was he wanting to himself on this occasion: he played the part as well as he ever did—with as much freshness and vigour. There was no abatement of spirit and energy—none of grace and dignity: his look, his action, his expression of the character, were the same as they ever were: they could not be finer. It is mere cant, to say that Mr. Kemble has quite fallen off of late—that he is not what he was: he may have fallen off in the opinion of some jealous admirers, because he is no longer in exclusive possession of the Stage: but in himself he has not fallen off a jot. Why then do we approve of his retiring? Because we do not wish him to wait till it is *necessary* for him to retire. On the last evening, he displayed the same excellences, and gave the same prominence to the very same passages, that he used to do. We might refer to his manner of doing obeisance to his mother in the triumphal procession in the second act, and to the scene with Aufidius in the last act, as among the most striking instances. The action with which he accompanied the proud taunt to Aufidius—

> 'Like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
> Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli;
> Alone I did it——'

gave double force and beauty to the image. Again, where he waits for the coming of Aufidius in his rival's house, he stood at the foot of the statue of Mars, himself another Mars! In the reconciliation scene with his mother, which is the finest in the play, he was not equally impressive. Perhaps this was not the fault of Mr. Kemble, but of the stage itself, which can hardly do justice to such thoughts and sentiments as here occur:

> '———— My mother bows:
> As if Olympus to a mole-hill should
> In supplication nod.'

Mr. Kemble's voice seemed to faint and stagger, to be strained and cracked, under the weight of this majestic image: but, indeed, we know of no tones deep or full enough to bear along the swelling tide of sentiment it conveys; nor can we conceive any thing in outward form to answer to it, except when Mrs. Siddons played the part of Volumnia.

We may on this occasion be expected to say a few words on the general merits of Mr. Kemble as an actor, and on the principal characters he performed; in doing which, we shall

> '——— Nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in malice.'

It has always appeared to us, that the range of characters in which Mr. Kemble more particularly shone, and was superior to every other actor, were those which consisted in the developement of some one solitary sentiment or exclusive passion. From a want of rapidity, of scope, and variety, he was often deficient in expressing the bustle and complication of different interests; nor did he possess the faculty of overpowering the mind by sudden and irresistible bursts of passion: but in giving the habitual workings of a predominant feeling, as in Penruddock, or The Stranger, in Coriolanus, Cato, and some others, where all the passions move round a central point, and are governed by one master-key, he stood unrivalled. Penruddock, in The Wheel of Fortune, was one of his most correct and interesting performances, and one of the most perfect on the modern stage. The deeply-rooted, mild, pensive melancholy of the character, its embittered recollections, and dignified benevolence, were conveyed by Mr. Kemble with equal truth, elegance, and feeling. In The Stranger, again, which is in fact the same character, he brooded over the recollection of disappointed hope till it became a part of himself; it sunk deeper into his mind the longer he dwelt upon it; his regrets only became more profound as they became more durable. His person was moulded to the character. The weight of sentiment which oppressed him was never suspended: the spring at his heart was never lightened—it seemed as if his whole life had been a suppressed sigh! So in Coriolanus, he exhibited the ruling passion with the same unshaken firmness, he preserved the same haughty dignity of demeanour, the same energy of will, and unbending sternness of temper throughout. He was swayed by a single impulse. His tenaciousness of purpose was only irritated by opposition; he turned neither to the right nor the left; the vehemence with which he moved forward increasing every instant, till it hurried him on to the catastrophe. In Leontes, also, in The Winter's Tale (a character he at one time played often),

the growing jealousy of the King, and the exclusive possession which this passion gradually obtains over his mind, were marked by him in the finest manner, particularly where he exclaims—

> '—— Is whispering nothing?
> Is leaning cheek to cheek? Is meeting noses?
> Kissing with inside lip? Stopping the career
> Of laughter with a sigh (a note infallible
> Of breaking honesty)? Horsing foot on foot?
> Skulking in corners? Wishing clocks more swift?
> Hours minutes? The noon midnight? and all eyes
> Blind with the pin and web, but their's; their's only,
> That would unseen be wicked? Is this nothing?
> Why then the world and that's in't is nothing,
> The covering sky is nothing, Bohemia's nothing,
> My wife is nothing, if this be nothing!'

In the course of this enumeration, every proof told stronger, and followed with quicker and harder strokes; his conviction became more rivetted at every step of his progress; and at the end, his mind, and 'every corporal agent,' appeared wound up to a phrenzy of despair. In such characters, Mr. Kemble had no occasion to call to his aid either the resources of invention, or the tricks of the art: his success depended on the increasing intensity with which he dwelt on a given feeling, or enforced a passion that resisted all interference or control.

In Hamlet, on the contrary, Mr. Kemble in our judgment unavoidably failed from a want of flexibility, of that quick sensibility which yields to every motive, and is borne away with every breath of fancy, which is distracted in the multiplicity of its reflections, and lost in the uncertainty of its resolutions. There is a perpetual undulation of feeling in the character of Hamlet; but in Mr. Kemble's acting, 'there was neither variableness nor shadow of turning.' He played it like a man in armour, with a determined inveteracy of purpose, in one undeviating straight line, which is as remote from the natural grace and indolent susceptibility of the character, as the sharp angles and abrupt starts to produce an effect which Mr. Kean throws into it.

In King John, which was one of Mr. Kemble's most admired parts, the transitions of feeling, though just and powerful, were prepared too long beforehand, and were too long in executing to produce their full effect. The actor seemed waiting for some complicated machinery to enable him to make his next movement, instead of trusting to the true impulses of passion. There was no sudden collision of opposite elements; the golden flash of genius was not there; 'the fire i' th' flint was cold,' for it was not struck. If an image

could be constructed by magic art to play King John, it would play it in much the same manner that Mr. Kemble played it.

In Macbeth, Mr. Kemble was unequal to 'the tug and war' of the passions which assail him: he stood as it were at bay with fortune, and maintained his ground too steadily against 'fate and metaphysical aid;' instead of staggering and reeling under the appalling visions of the preternatural world, and having his frame wrenched from all the holds and resting places of his will, by the stronger power of imagination. In the latter scenes, however, he displayed great energy and spirit; and there was a fine melancholy retrospective tone in his manner of delivering the lines,

> 'My way of life has fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf,'

which smote upon the heart, and remained there ever after. His Richard III. wanted that tempest and whirlwind of the soul, that life and spirit, and dazzling rapidity of motion, which fills the stage, and burns in every part of it, when Mr. Kean performs this character. To Mr. Kean's acting in general, we might apply the lines of the poet, where he describes

> 'The fiery soul that, working out its way,
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
> And o'er-inform'd the tenement of clay.'

Mr. Kemble's manner, on the contrary, had always something dry, hard, and pedantic in it. 'You shall relish him more in the scholar than the soldier:' but his monotony did not fatigue, his formality did not displease; because there was always sense and meaning in what he did. The fineness of Mr. Kemble's figure may be supposed to have led to that statue-like appearance, which his acting was sometimes too apt to assume: as the diminutiveness of Mr. Kean's person has probably compelled him to bustle about too much, and to attempt to make up for the want of dignity of form, by the violence and contrast of his attitudes. If Mr. Kemble were to remain in the same posture for half an hour, his figure would only excite admiration: if Mr. Kean were to stand still only for a moment, the contrary effect would be apparent. One of the happiest and most spirited of all Mr. Kemble's performances, and in which even his defects were blended with his excellences to produce a perfect whole, was his Pierre. The dissolute indifference assumed by this character, to cover the darkness of his designs, and the fierceness of his revenge, accorded admirably with Mr. Kemble's natural manner; and the tone of morbid rancorous raillery, in which Pierre delights to indulge, was in unison with the actor's reluctant, contemptuous personifications

of gaiety, with the scornful spirit of his Comic Muse, which always laboured—*invita Minerva*—against the grain. Cato was another of those parts for which Mr. Kemble was peculiarly fitted by his physical advantages. There was nothing for him to do in this character, but to appear in it. It had all the dignity of still-life. It was a studied piece of classical costume—a conscious exhibition of elegantly disposed drapery, that was all: yet, as a mere display of personal and artificial grace, it was inimitable.

It has been suggested that Mr. Kemble chiefly excelled in his Roman characters, and among others in Brutus. If it be meant, that he excelled in those which imply a certain stoicism of feeling and energy of will, this we have already granted; but Brutus is not a character of this kind, and Mr. Kemble failed in it for that reason. Brutus is not a stoic, but a humane enthusiast. There is a tenderness of nature under the garb of assumed severity; an inward current of generous feelings, which burst out, in spite of circumstances, with bleeding freshness; a secret struggle of mind, and disagreement between his situation and his intentions; a lofty inflexibility of purpose, mingled with an effeminate abstractedness of thought, which Mr. Kemble did not give.

In short, we think the distinguishing excellence of his acting may be summed up in one word—*intensity*; in the seizing upon some one feeling or idea, in insisting upon it, in never letting it go, and in working it up, with a certain graceful consistency, and conscious grandeur of conception, to a very high degree of pathos or sublimity. If he had not the unexpected bursts of nature and genius, he had all the regularity of art; if he did not display the tumult and conflict of opposite passions in the soul, he gave the deepest and most permanent interest to the uninterrupted progress of individual feeling; and in embodying a high idea of certain characters, which belong rather to sentiment than passion, to energy of will, than to loftiness or to originality of imagination, he was the most excellent actor of his time. This praise of him is not exaggerated: the blame we have mixed with it is not invidious. We have only to add to both, the expression of our grateful remembrances and best wishes—Hail, and farewell!

THE END.

NOTES

NOTES

LECTURES ON THE ENGLISH POETS

This, Hazlitt's second course of public lectures (his first having been that on English Philosophy in 1812), was delivered at the Surrey Institution, Great Surrey Street, near Blackfriars Bridge, during January and February, 1818. It was attended, more or less regularly, by Keats, Crabb Robinson, Talfourd, and Procter, all of whom have left us some particulars; and, on its conclusion, it was repeated in full at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, in the Strand (where Coleridge also lectured), in April and May. There is contemporary evidence that this double delivery was regarded as proof of exceptional success.

I. ON POETRY IN GENERAL

PAGE

1. *It comes home, etc.* Unacknowledged, from Dedication, Bacon's *Essays.*
   '*Spreads its sweet leaves,' etc.* *Romeo and Juliet,* I. 1. 158.
2. '*The stuff of which our life is made.*' A reminiscence, possibly, of *The Tempest,* IV. 1. 156.
   '*Mere oblivion.*' *As You Like It,* II. 7. 165.
   '*Man's life is poor* [cheap] *as beast's.*' *King Lear,* II. 4. 270.
   Always spoken prose. *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme,* Act II, Scene 6.
   '*There is warrant for it.*' Cf. *Richard III.,* I. 4. 112 and *Macbeth,* II. 3. 151.
   '*Such seething brains,' etc.* *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* V. 1. 4–18.
3. *Angelica and Medoro.* Characters in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516), which Hazlitt knew in Sir John Harington's translation (1591). See his *Edinburgh Review* article 'Sismondi's Literature of the South.'
   Plato banished the poets. *The Republic,* Book x.
   '*Ecstasy is very cunning in.*' *Hamlet,* III. 4. 138.
   According to Lord Bacon. Cf. a passage in *The Advancement of Learning,* Book II., Chap. iv., § 2 (ed. Aldis Wright, p. 102), quoted, characteristically, from memory: 'And therefore it was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind, by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind; whereas reason doth buckle and bow the mind unto the nature of things.'
4. '*Our eyes are made the fools.*' Cf. *Macbeth.* II. 1. 44.
   '*That if it would but apprehend,' etc.* *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* V. 1. 19.
   The flame o' the taper. *Cymbeline,* II. 2. 19–21.
   For they are old. Cf. *King Lear,* II. 4. 192–95.
5. *Nothing but his unkind daughters.* Cf. *King Lear,* III. 4. 69–70.
   The little dogs. *King Lear,* III. 6. 65.
   So I am. *King Lear,* IV. 7. 70.
   Oh now for ever. *Othello,* III. 3. 348–58.

NOTES

PAGE

6. *Never, Iago.* *Othello*, III. 3. 454–61.
   But there where I have garner'd. *Othello*, IV. 2. 56–57. After this quotation add from the first edition a passage which Hazlitt deleted on reprinting: 'This is like that fine stroke of pathos in the *Paradise Lost*, where Milton makes Adam say to Eve,

   "Should God create another Eve, and I
   Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
   Would never from my heart!"'

   (IX. 911–13). We do not know why he should remove the passage.
   Moore. Edward Moore (1712–57), author of *The Gamester* (1753).
   Lillo. George Lillo (1693–1739), author of *The London Merchant, or the History of George Barnwell* (1731).
7. *As Mr. Burke observes.* *Sublime and Beautiful*, Part I. § 15.
   '*Masterless passion sways us,' etc.* *Merchant of Venice*, IV. 1. 51–52, the Rowe-Hanmer text.
   '*Satisfaction to the thought.*' Cf. *Othello*, III. 3. 97.
8. *Now night descending.* *Dunciad*, I. 89–90.
   Throw him on the steep. *Ode to Fear*, ll. 10 and 14–15.
   Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend. *King Lear*, I. 4. 283–84, from memory.
   '*Both at the first and now,' etc.* *Hamlet*, III. 2. 25.
9. '*And visions,' etc.* Gray to Horace Walpole (*Letters*, ed. Tovey, I. 7–8). The couplet is a favourite with Hazlitt.
   Doctor Chalmers's Discourses. Thomas Chalmers, D.D. (1780–1847), who sought in his *A Series of Discourses on the Christian Revelation, viewed in connection with Modern Astronomy* (1817), to reconcile science with current conceptions of Christianity. See *The Spirit of the Age.*
10. '*Bandit fierce.*' *Comus*, 426.
    '*Our fell of hair,' etc.* *Macbeth*, V. 5. 11.
    Macbeth . . . for the sake of the music. Cf. *The Round Table*, vol. IV. p. 138 and note.
    '*Obscurity her curtain,' etc.* From a poem *To the Honourable and Reverend F. C.* in Dodsley's *Collection of Poems*, vol. VI. (1758), p. 138, by Sneyd Davies (1709–69). Hazlitt quotes the couplet more than once.
    '*Between the acting,' etc.* *Julius Caesar*, II. 1. 63–69, freely recalled.
11. l. 13. The first edition, after the words 'not an informing principle within them,' adds a quotation from *Paradise Lost* (VIII. 538–39):

    '. . . In outward show
    Elaborate, of inward less exact.'

    Hazlitt deletes the quotation, somewhat unusually, in the 'Errata.'
    '*Thoughts that voluntary move,' etc.* *Paradise Lost*, III. 37–38.
    '*The words of Mercury,' etc.* Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. 2. 940.
    So from the ground. *Faery Queene*, I. vi. 13.
12. *Makes these odds all even.* Unacknowledged from *Measure for Measure*, III. 1. 41.
    '*The secret* [hidden] *soul of harmony.*' *L'Allegro*, 144.
    '*The golden cadences of poetry.*' Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. 2. 126.
    '*Sailing with supreme dominion,' etc.* Gray's *Progress of Poesy*, III. 3.
13. *Rises into a sort of blank verse.* Of which Hazlitt's prose, as he doubtless well knew, provides examples. Cf. the late W. E. Henley's introduction to Waller and Glover's edition (1902–1906), vol. I. p. 23.
    '*Sounding always,' etc.* Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, 275.

PAGE

13. *Addison's Campaign.* 1705. Addison wrote it on Marlborough's victory of Blenheim. For its description as a 'Gazette in Rhyme,' see Dr. Joseph Warton's (1722–1800) *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* (1756–82).
14. '*Married to immortal verse.*' *L'Allegro*, 137.
    '*Dipped in dews of Castalie.*' Cf. 'With verses, dipt in dew of Castalie.' Spenser, *The Ruines of Time*, 431.
    The most beautiful of all the Greek tragedies. Sophocles's *Philoctetes.* The speech Hazlitt refers to begins at line 255.
    As I walked about. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Part I. p. 125, ed. G. A. Aitken.
15. '*Give an echo,*' *etc.* *Twelfth Night*, II. 4. 21.
    Our poesy. *Timon of Athens*, I. 1. 21–25 with line omitted.
16. '*All plumed like estriches,*' *etc.* Cf. 1 *King Henry IV.*, IV. 1. 98–103.
    '*If we fly into the uttermost parts of the earth,*' *etc.* Cf. *Psalms* CXXXIX. 9–11.
    Obscure and infinite. See note to vol. IV. p. 231.
17. l. 3. The words 'in the Old Testament' are added in the second edition.
18. *Pope Anastasius the Sixth.* *Inferno*, XI. 8.
    Count Ugolino. *Inferno*, XXXIII. For Hazlitt on Reynolds' 'Ugolino' see his 'Character of Sir Joshua Reynolds' in the later volumes devoted to his journalism.
    The lamentation of Selma. Colma's lament in the *Songs of Selma.*

II. ON CHAUCER AND SPENSER

PAGE

19. *Chaucer.* Modern authorities date Chaucer's birth from 1340. It is no longer held as true that he had an university education. The story of his plot against the king, his flight and his imprisonment, is also legendary.
20. '*Close pent up,*' and the next quotation. *King Lear*, III. 2. 57–58.
    '*Flowery tenderness.*' *Measure for Measure*, III. 1. 83.
    And as the new abashed nightingale. *Troilus and Criseyde*, III. 177.
    Thus passeth yere by yere. ll. 1033–39.
21. *That stondeth at a gap.* Knightes Tale, 1639–42.
    Have ye not seen. Tale of the Man of Law, 645–51.
    Swiche sorrow he maketh. Knightes Tale, 1277–80.
22. '*Babbling gossip of the air.*' *Twelfth Night*, I. 5. 292.
    There was also a nonne, etc. Prologue, 118–29; 137–55; 165–78; and 189–207.
24. *Lawyer Dowling in Tom Jones.* Book VIII., Chap. viii.
    No wher so besy a man. Prologue, 321–22.
    Whose hous it snewed. *Ibid.*, 345.
    Who rode upon a rouncie. *Ibid.*, 390.
    Whose studie was but litel of the Bible. *Ibid.*, 438.
    All whose parish. *Ibid.*, 449–52.
    Whose parish was wide. *Ibid.*, 491.
    A slendre colerike man. *Ibid.*, 587.
    Chaucer, it has been said, numbered the classes of men. The reference is, apparently, to Blake's *Descriptive Catalogue* of his exhibition in 1809: 'As Newton numbered the stars, and as Linneus numbered the plants, so Chaucer numbered the classes of men.' (*Writings*, ed. Keynes, 1925, vol. III. p. 96). Hazlitt's only other reference to Blake is a passing mention in the *Plain Speaker* essay, 'On the Old Age of Artists.' Crabb Robinson introduced him to Blake's work on March 10, 1811: 'I shewed him Blake's Young—he saw no merit in them as designs. I read him some of the Poems—he was much struck with them and expressed himself with his usual strength and singularity' (*Life of Hazlitt*, p. 132).

NOTES

PAGE

24. *A Sompnoure.* Prologue, 623–41; 663–69.
25. *Ther maist thou se, etc.* Knightes Tale, 2128–51; 2155–78; 2185–86.
27. *The Flower and the Leaf.* Modern scholars regard the evidence which attributes this poem to Chaucer as insufficient. Hazlitt is drawing a few words here and at the foot of the next page from *The Round Table*, vol. IV. p. 162.
28. '*Welling out of the heart.*' Unidentified.
    Griselda. Clerkes Tale.
    The faith of Constance. Tale of the Man of Law.
29. *Oh Alma redemptoris mater.* Prioress's Tale.
    Whan that Arcite. Knightes Tale, 1355–71.
    Alas the wo! Ibid., 2771–79.
30. *The three temples. Ibid.*, 1918–2092.
    Dryden's version, i.e. his 'Palamon and Arcite.'
    Why shulde I not. Knightes Tale, 1967–96, 1972–80.
    The statue of Mars. Ibid., 2041–42, 2047–48.
    '*That heaves no sigh,' etc.* 'Heave thou no sigh, nor shed a tear,' Prior: *Answer to Chloe.*
    Let me not like a worm. Clerkes Tale, 880.
31. *Nought fer fro thilke paleis honourable. Ibid.*, 197–245 and 274–94.
32. '*All conscience and tender heart.*' Prologue, 150.
    '*From grave to gay,' etc.* Pope, *Essay on Man*, Ep. IV. 380.
33. *The Cock and the Fox.* Nonne Preestes Tale.
    January and May. Marchantes Tale.
    The story of the three thieves. Pardoners Tale.
    Mr. West. Benjamin West (1738–1820). Hazlitt had written on this picture in *The Edinburgh Magazine* for December, 1817. See the later volumes devoted to his journalism.
34. *Ne Deth, alas.* Marchantes Tale, 727–38.
    Occleve. Thomas Hoccleve or Occleve (b. 1368), who expressed his grief at his 'master dear' Chaucer's death in his version of *De Regimine Principum.*
    '*Ancient Gower.*' *Pericles*, Chorus I. 2. John Gower (1330–1408), who wrote *Confessio Amantis* (1392–93), and to whom Chaucer dedicated ('O moral Gower') his *Troilus and Criseyde.*
    Lydgate. John Lydgate (*c.* 1370–*c.* 1440), poet and imitator of Chaucer.
    Wyatt, Surry, and Sackville. Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503–42), courtier and poet; Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (*c.* 1518–47), who shares with Wyatt the honour of introducing the sonnet into English verse; Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset (*c.* 1536–1608), part author of the earliest tragedy in English, *Ferrex and Porrex*, acted 1561–62.
    Sir John Davies (1569–1626), poet and statesman. Spenser was sent to Ireland in 1580 as private secretary to Arthur, Lord Grey de Wilton, Lord Deputy of Ireland. Davies was sent to Ireland as Solicitor-General in 1603, four years after Spenser's death.
    The bog of Allan. Faerie Queene, II. IX. 16.
    An ably written paper. 'A View of the Present State of Ireland,' registered 1598, printed 1633.
    An obscure inn. In King Street, Westminster, January 13, 1599.
    The treatment he received from Burleigh. It has been suggested that the disfavour with which Spenser was regarded by Burleigh—a disfavour that stood in the way of his preferment—was because of Spenser's friendship with Essex, and Leicester's patronage of him.
35. *Clap on high. Faerie Queene*, III. XII. 23.
    In green vine leaves. I. IV. 22.

PAGE

35. *Upon the top of all his lofty crest.* I. VII. 32.
 In reading the Faery Queen. The incidents mentioned will be found in Books III. 9, I. 7, II. 6, and III. 12, respectively.
36. '*And mask, and antique pageantry.*' *L'Allegro*, 128.
 And more to lull him. I. I. 41.
 '*The honey-heavy dew of slumber.*' *Julius Caesar*, II. I. 230.
 Eftsoons they heard. II. XII. 70–71.
 The whiles some one did chaunt. *Ibid.*, 74–78.
38. *The House of Pride.* I. IV. 4.
 The Cave of Mammon. II. VII. 28–50.
 The Cave of Despair. I. IX. 33–35.
 The wars he well remember'd. II. IX. 56.
 The description of Belphœbe. II. III. 21.
 Florimel and the Witch's son. III. VII. 12.
 The gardens of Adonis. III. VI. 29.
 The Bower of Bliss. II. XII. 42.
 Poussin's pictures. Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665). See *Table Talk*, 'On a Landscape of Nicholas Poussin.'
 And eke that stranger knight. III. IX. 20.
 Her hair was sprinkled with flowers. II. III. 30.
 The cold icicles. III. VIII. 35.
 That was Arion crowned. IV. XI. 23–24.
39. *And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony.* I. IV. 21–22.
 And next to him rode lustfull Lechery. *Ibid.*, 24–26.
40. *Yet not more sweet.* Carmen Nuptiale, *The Lay of the Laureate* (1816), xviii. 4–6.
 The first was Fancy. III. XII. 7–13, 22–23.
42. *The account of Satyrane.* I. VI. 24.
 Go seek some other play-fellows. Stanza 28.
 By the help of his fayre horns. III. X. 47.
 The change of Malbecco into Jealousy. III. X. 56–60.
 That house's form. II. VII. 28–29, 23.
 Note. '*That all with one consent,*' *etc.* *Troilus and Cressida*, III. 3. 176.
43. *High over hill.* III. X. 55.
 Pope, who used to ask. Hazlitt repudiates this aspersion on Pope in his *Edinburgh Review* article on Spence's *Anecdotes* in May 1820.
 The account of Talus, the Iron Man. V. I. 12.
 The . . . Episode of Pastorella. VI. IX. 12.
44. '*In many a winding bout,*' *etc.* *L'Allegro*, 139–140.

III. ON SHAKESPEARE AND MILTON

Cf. this lecture (pp. 56–63) with *The Round Table* paper 'On Milton's Versification.'

PAGE

44. *In looking back to the great works.* In the opening of this lecture (to a point half-way down p. 46), Hazlitt is reproducing a favourite piece of his own writing, 'Why the Arts are Not Progressive.' See *The Round Table*, vol. IV. pp. 160–62.
46. '*The human face divine.*' *Paradise Lost*, III. 44.
 '*And made a sunshine in the shady place.*' *Faerie Queene*, I. III. 4.
 '*The fault,*' *etc.* Cf. *Julius Caesar*, I. 2. 140.
47. '*A mind reflecting ages past.*' These words occur in the first line of the laudatory poem on Shakespeare prefixed to the Second Folio (1632).

NOTES

PAGE

47. '*All corners of the earth*,' *etc.* *Cymbeline*, III. iv. 39.
   '*Nodded to him*,' *etc.* *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. I. 177.
   '*His so potent art.*' *Tempest*, V. I. 50.
48. '*Subject to the same skyey influences.*' Cf. *Measure for Measure*, III. I. 9.
   '*His frequent haunts.*' Cf. 'My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood,' *Comus*, 314.
   '*Coheres semblably together.*' Cf. 2 *Henry IV.*, V. I. 73.
   As it has been ingeniously remarked. By Coleridge, as Professor Zeitlin points out, in his 1811–12 course 'On Shakespeare and Milton' (Ninth Lecture, December 16). Since the text of these lectures was not published until 1856, from Payne Collier's shorthand notes, we may conclude that Hazlitt attended them, or this one at least. He was in London at the time (November 18 to January 27), and before Coleridge had concluded (at the Philosophical Society's rooms in Crane Court, Fleet Street) opened his own course on English Philosophy at the Russell Institution.
   Me and thy crying self. *The Tempest*, I. 2. 132.
   What, man! ne'er pull your hat. *Macbeth*, IV. 3. 208.
   Man delights not me. *Hamlet*, II. 2. 321.
   '*A combination and a form.*' *Hamlet.* III. 4. 60.
49. *There is a willow* [' grows aslant ']. *Hamlet*, IV. 7. 167.
   The leaves of the willow. Cf. *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, vol. IV. p. 236, where Hazlitt credits this observation to ' a friend.'
50. *He's speaking now.* *Antony and Cleopatra*, I. 5. 24.
   It is my birth-day. *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. 13. 185.
51. '*Nigh sphered in Heaven.*' Collins's *Ode on the Poetical Character*, 66.
   '*Playing with wisdom.*' Cf.

> 'Thou with eternal Wisdom didst converse,
> Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play,
> In presence of the Almighty Father.'
>
> *Paradise Lost*, VII. 9–11.

   '*To make society the sweeter welcome.*' *Macbeth*, III. I. 42.
52. *With a little act, etc.* *Othello*, III. 3. 329.
   '*While rage with rage*,' *etc.* Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, I. 3. 52.
   '*In their untroubled element*,' *etc.*

> 'That glorious star
> In its untroubled element will shine,
> As now it shines, when we are laid in earth
> And safe from all our sorrows.'
>
> *The Excursion*, VI. 763–66.

   Satan's address to the sun. *Paradise Lost*, IV. 31 *et seq.*
53. *O that I were a mockery king.* *Richard II.*, IV. I. 260.
   His form had not yet lost. *Paradise Lost*, I. 591–94.
   The Moods of their own Minds. The reference is to the section division, 'Moods of my own Mind' in Wordsworth's *Poems in Two Volumes* of 1807.
   '*With what measure they mete*,' *etc.* *St. Mark* IV. 24; *St. Luke* VI. 38.
   '*It glances from heaven to earth*,' *etc.* *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V. I. 13.
   '*Puts a girdle*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*, II. I. 175.
54. *I ask that I may waken.* *Troilus and Cressida*, I. 3. 227–30.
   No man is the lord of anything. *Ibid.*, III. 3. 115–23, with omission.
   Rouse yourself. *Ibid.*, III. 3. 222.

PAGE

55. *In Shakespeare, any other word, etc.* Hazlitt sometimes gives his readers the opportunity of judging this for themselves. See the *Plain Speaker* essay, 'On Application to Study,' vol. XII. p. 58, for a demonstration as to how he arrived at his quotations.
Light thickens. *Macbeth*, III. 2. 50.
His whole course of love. *Othello*, I. 3. 91.
The business of the state. *Ibid.*, IV. 2. 166.
'*Of ditties highly penned,*' *etc.* 1 *King Henry IV.*, III. 1. 208–10.
'*And so by many winding nooks,*' *etc.* *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II. 7. 31.

56. '*Great vulgar and the small.*' Cowley's *Translation of Horace's Ode*, III. 1.
'*His delights,*' *etc.* *Antony and Cleopatra*, V. 2. 89.

57. '*Blind Thamyris, etc.* *Paradise Lost*, III. 35–36.
'*With darkness,*' *etc.* *Ibid.*, VII. 27.
'*Piling up every stone,*' *etc.* *Ibid.*, XI. 324–25.
For after . . . I had from my first years. *The Reason of Church Government*, Book II, Preface.

58. *The noble heart.* *Faerie Queene*, I. v. 1.
'*Makes Ossa like a wart.*' *Hamlet*, V. 1. 306.

59. *Him followed Rimmon.* *Paradise Lost*, I. 467–69.
As when a vulture. *Ibid.*, III. 431–39.
The great vision. *Lycidas*, 161.
The Pilot. *Paradise Lost*, I. 204.
The wandering moon. *Il Penseroso*, 67–70.

60. '*Like a steam of rich distilled perfumes.*' *Comus*, 556.
He soon saw within ken. *Paradise Lost*, III. 621–44.

61. *With Atlantean shoulders.* *Ibid.*, II. 306–7.
Lay floating many a rood. *Ibid.*, I. 196.
That sea beast, Leviathan. *Ibid.*, I. 200–2.
His hand was known. *Ibid.*, I. 732–47.

62. *But chief the spacious hall.* *Ibid.*, I. 762–88.
Round he surveys. *Ibid.*, III. 555–67.

63. *Such as the meeting soul.* *L'Allegro*, 138–40.
'*The hidden soul of harmony.*' *Ibid.*, 144.
'*God the Father turns a school-divine.*' Pope, *Imit. 1st Epis. 2nd Bk. Horace*, 102.
As when heaven's fire. *Paradise Lost*, I. 612–13.

64. *All is not lost.* *Ibid.*, I. 106–9.
That intellectual being. *Ibid.*, II. 147–48.
Being swallowed up. *Ibid.*, II. 149–50.
Fallen cherub. *Ibid.*, I. 157–58.
Rising aloft. *Ibid.*, I. 225–26.

65. *The mystic German critics would restore.* Cf. the *Plain Speaker* essay, 'On Reading Old Books,' vol. XII. p. 227.
Is this the region. *Paradise Lost*, I. 242–63.

66. *His philippics against Salmasius.* In 1651 Milton replied in his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano* to *Defensio Regia pro Carolo I.* (1649) by Claudius Salmasius or Claude de Saumaise (1588–1658), a professor at Leyden. The latter work had been undertaken at the request of Charles II. by Salmasius, who was regarded as the leading European scholar of his day.
With hideous ruin. *Paradise Lost*, I. 46.
Retreated in a silent valley. *Ibid.*, II. 547–50.
A noted political writer of the present day. Hazlitt's brother-in-law, Dr. Stoddart. See *Political Essays*, 'Illustrations of the Times Newspaper,' and notes thereto.
Longinus. *On the Sublime*, IX.

NOTES

PAGE

67. *'No kind of traffic,' etc.* Cf. *The Tempest*, II. I. 148.
 'The generations were prepared,' etc. *The Excursion*, VI. 554–57.
 'The unapparent deep.' *Paradise Lost*, VII. 103.
 'Know to know no more.' Cf. Cowper, *Truth*, 327.
 'They toiled not,' etc. *St. Matthew* VI. 28, 29.
 'In them the burthen,' etc. Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*, 38–41.
 'Such as angels weep.' *Paradise Lost*, I. 620.
68. *In either hand.* *Ibid.*, XII. 637–47.

IV. ON DRYDEN AND POPE

Cf. this lecture (pp. 69–72) with the paper contributed by Hazlitt to *The Edinburgh Magazine* for February 1818, 'On the Question Whether Pope was a Poet.'

PAGE

70. *'The pale reflex of Cynthia's brow.'* *Romeo and Juliet*, III. 5. 20.
71. *Martha Blount* (1690–1762). Pope's lifelong friend, to whom he dedicated several poems, and to whom he bequeathed most of his property.
 In Fortune's ray. *Troilus and Cressida*, I. 3. 47.
 The gnarled oak . . . the soft myrtle. *Measure for Measure*, II. 2. 116.
 'Calm contemplation and poetic ease.' Thomson's *Autumn*, 1275.
72. *'More subtle web Arachne cannot spin,' etc.* *Faerie Queene*, II. XII. 77.
 Not with more glories. *The Rape of the Lock*, II. 1–22.
73. *From her fair head.* *Ibid.*, III. 154.
 Now meet thy fate. *Ibid.*, V. 87–96.
 The Lutrin of Boileau. Boileau's account of an ecclesiastical dispute over a reading-desk was published in 1674–81. It was translated into English by Nicholas Rowe in 1708. *The Rape of the Lock* was published in 1712–14.
 'Tis with our judgments. *Essay on Criticism*, 9–10.
74. *Still green with bays.* *Ibid.*, 181–92.
 'His little bark with theirs should sail.' Cf. *Essay on Man*, IV. 383–86.
 Couplets rhyming to the word sense. Cf. *The Round Table*, vol. IV. p. 41
75. *'There is but one perfect writer,' etc.* Cf. *St. Matthew* V. 48.
 There died the best of passions. *Eloisa to Abelard*, 40.
76. *If ever chance.* *Ibid.*, 347–48.
 'He spins the thread of his verbosity,' etc. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. I. 18.
 The very words. Cf. 'The selfsame tune and words,' *Macbeth*, I. 3. 88.
 The sarcasm already quoted. See *ante*, p. 8.
 Now night descending. *The Dunciad*, I. 89–90.
 Virtue may chuse. *Epilogue to the Satires*, Dialogue I., 137–72.
77. *His character of Chartres.* *Moral Essays*, Epistle III.
 Where Murray. *Imitations of Horace*, Epistle VI., To Mr. Murray, 52–53. William Murray (1704–93) was created Baron Mansfield in 1756.
 Why rail they then. *Epilogue to the Satires*, Dialogue II. 138–39.
 Despise low thoughts [joys]. *Imitations of Horace*, Epistle VI., To Mr. Murray, 60–62.
78. *Character of Addison.* *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 193–214.
 Alas! how changed. *Moral Essays*, Epistle III. 305–8.
 Why did I write? *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 125–46.
 Oh, lasting as those colours. *Epistle to Mr. Jervas*, 63–78.
79. *Who have eyes, but they see not.* *Psalm* CXV. 5, etc.
 I lisp'd in numbers. *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 128.
 Et quum conabar scribere, versus erat. Cf. Ovid, *Trist.*, IV. X. 25–26.
80. *Besides these jolly birds.* *The Hind and the Panther*, III. 991–1025.

PAGE

81. *The jolly God.* *Alexander's Feast*, 49–52.
82. *The best character of Shakespeare.* Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, ed. Ker, I. 79–80.
    Tancred and Sigismunda. i.e., *Sigismonda and Guiscardo.*
    Thou gladder of the mount. *Palamon and Arcite*, III. 145.
83. *Donne.* John Donne (1573–1631).
    Waller, Edmund Waller (1605–1687). His Saccharissa was Lady Dorothy Sidney, daughter of the Earl of Leicester.
    Marvel. Andrew Marvell (1621–78), 'poet, patriot, and friend of Milton.'
    Harsh, as the words of Mercury. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 940.
    Rochester. John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647–80).
84. *Denham.* Sir John Denham (1615–69). His *Cooper's Hill* was published in 1642.
    Withers. George Wither, or Withers (1588–1667). The lines quoted by Hazlitt are from 'The Shepheards' Hunting' (1615).

V. ON THOMSON AND COWPER

Cf. the conclusion of this lecture (pp. 99–103) with *The Round Table* paper, 'On the Love of the Country.'

PAGE

85. *Dr. Johnson makes it his praise.* 'It is said by Lord Lyttelton, in the Prologue to his posthumous play, that his works contained "no line which, dying, he could wish to blot."' *Life of Thomson.*
    Bub Doddington. George Bubb Dodington (1691–1762). His Diary was published in 1784.
    '*Would he had blotted a thousand!*' Said by Ben Jonson of Shakespeare, in his *Timber.*
86. '*Cannot be constrained by mastery.*'

    'Love will not submit to be controlled
    By mastery.'

    The Excursion, VI. 163-64.

    Come, gentle Spring! 'Spring,' 1–4.
    And see where surly Winter. *Ibid.*, 11–25.
88. *A man of genius.* Coleridge. See 'My First Acquaintance with Poets.'
    A burnished fly. 'As when in prime of June a burnished fly.' *The Castle of Indolence*, I. 64.
    For whom the merry bells. *Ibid.*, I. 62.
    All was one full-swelling bed. *Ibid.*, I. 33.
    The stock-dove's plaint. *Ibid.*, I. 4.
    The effects of the contagion. 'Summer,' 1040–51.
    Of the frequent corse. *Ibid.*, 1048–49.
    Breath'd hot. *Ibid.*, 961–79.
89. *The inhuman rout, etc.* 'Autumn,' 439–44.
    There through the prison. 'Winter,' 799–809.
    Where pure Niemi's fairy mountain rise. *Ibid.*, 875–76.
    The traveller lost in the snow. *Ibid.*, 925–35.
90. *Through the hush'd air.* *Ibid.*, 229–64.
    Enfield's Speaker. *The Speaker*, or Miscellaneous Pieces selected from the best English Writers, 1775, and often reprinted. By William Enfield, LL.D. (1741–97).
    Palemon and Lavinia. 'Autumn,' 177–209.

NOTES

PAGE

90. *Damon and Musidora.* 'Summer,' 1267–1370.
    Celadon and Amelia. *Ibid.*, 1171–1222.
91. '*Overrun with the spleen.*' Unidentified.
    '*Unbought grace.* 'The unbought grace of life . . . is gone!' Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution* (ed. Payne, p. 89).
92. *His Vashti.* *The Task*, III. 715.
    Crazy Kate, etc. *Ibid.*, I. 534 *et seq.*
    Loud hissing urn. *Ibid.*, IV. 39.
    The night was winter. *Ibid.*, VI. 57–117.
94. *The first volume of Cowper's poems.* This was published in 1782, and contained *Table Talk*, *The Progress of Error*, *Truth*, *Expostulation*, *Hope*, *Charity*, *Conversation*, *Retirement*, etc.
    The proud and humble believer. *Truth*, 58–70.
    Yon cottager. *Truth*, 317–36.
    l. 16. The words 'particularly the last' are added in the second edition.
    But if, unblamable in word and thought. *Hope*, 622–34.
95. *Robert Bloomfield* (1766–1823). *The Farmer's Boy* was written in a London garret. It was published in 1800, and rapidly became popular.
96. *Thomson, in describing the same image.* *The Seasons*, 'Spring,' 833–45.
    '*While yet the year,' etc.* 'As yet the trembling year is unconfirm'd.' *Ibid.*, 18.
97. *A kind of Ordinary.* See note to vol. IV. p. 154.
    Burn's Justice. *Justice of the Peace*, by Richard Burn (1709–85), the first of many editions of which was issued in two vols., 1755.
    '*Wears cruel garters.*' *King Lear*, II. 4. 7.
    A panopticon. Jeremy Bentham's name for his method of prison supervision. See *The Spirit of the Age.*
    '*The latter end of his Commonwealth,' etc.* Cf. *The Tempest*, II. 1. 157.
98. *Mother Hubberd's Tale.* *Prosopopoia, or Mother Hubberd's Tale.*
    The Oak and the Briar. 'Februarie,' in *The Shepheard's Calender.*
    Browne. William Browne (1591–?1643), pastoral poet. His chief work was *Britannia's Pastorals* (1613–16).
    The shepherd boy piping. Book I. chap. ii.
    Like Nicholas Poussin's picture. In the Louvre, where Hazlitt saw it in 1802.
    That well-known work. Hazlitt draws his characterisation of Walton (from here to line 7 on the next page) from the conclusion of his *Round Table* paper 'On John Buncle' (vol. IV. pp. 56–57).
99. *A fair and happy milk-maid.* The quotation of the 'Character' from Sir Thomas Overbury's *Wife* was contributed to the notes to Walton's *Complete Angler* by Sir Henry Ellis, editor of Bagster's edition, 1815. He took it from the twelfth edition, 1627, of Sir Thomas Overbury's book. Hazlitt has shortened it a little.
    I do not know that any one has ever explained. From this point to 'with unaltered looks' on p. 103, see the notes to *The Round Table*, vol. IV. pp. 17–20.
100. *Mr. Horne Tooke.* See the notes to Hazlitt's *New and Improved English Grammar*, in vol. III., and *The Spirit of the Age.*
    '*The heart of his mystery.*' *Hamlet*, III. 2. 382.
102. '*Expatiates freely of thee.*' Pope's *Essay on Man*, Epis. I. 5.
    Mrs. Radcliffe's romances. Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823), author of *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), etc.
103. *My heart leaps up.* Wordsworth's poem, from memory, presumably.
    Ah! voila de la pervenche. *Confessions*, Part I. Book VI.
    '*That wandering voice.*' Wordsworth. *To the Cuckoo.*

VI. ON SWIFT, YOUNG, GRAY, COLLINS, Etc.

PAGE

104. *Parnell.* Thomas Parnell (1679–1717). His poems were published by Pope, and his life was written by Goldsmith.
Arbuthnot. John Arbuthnot (1667–1735), physician and writer. He had the chief share in the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*, which was published amongst Pope's works in 1741. His *History of John Bull* was published in 1712.
Among common English words. See, in illustration of this point, one of Hazlitt's *Atlas* papers, 'Richesse de la Langue,' in the volumes devoted to his journalism. 'On Familiar Style,' in *Table Talk*, is a development of this paragraph in general.
105. *Trim. . . . the old jack-boots. Tristram Shandy*, Book III. chap. 20.
106. *Prior.* Matthew Prior (1664–1721), diplomatist and writer of 'occasional' verse.
Sedley. Sir Charles Sedley (1639–1701), Restoration courtier and poet.
Little Will. An English Ballad on the taking of Namur by the King of Great Britain, 1695.
107. *Gay.* John Gay (1685–1732).
In composing it. The account of *The Beggar's Opera* which follows is from *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Examiner*, and *The Round Table.* See vol. IV. pp. 65–66 and the notes thereto.
108. *Sir Richard Blackmore.* Court physician to William and Anne. He died in 1729, after having written six epics in sixty books.
109. *Mr. Jekyll's parody.* Joseph Jekyll (1754–1837), Master of Chancery. The parody was published in *The Morning Chronicle*, Friday, Aug. 19, 1809.
A City Shower. See *The Tatler*, No. 238.
110. *Mary the cookmaid . . . Mrs. Harris.* 'Mary the Cook-maid's letter to Dr. Sheridan,' 1723; 'Mrs. Harris's Petition,' 1699.
Rector of Laracor. Swift was appointed to the vicarage of Laracor, Trim, West Meath, Ireland, in 1700.
111. *Gulliver's nurse.* In the Voyage to Brobdingnag.
An eminent critic. Hazlitt is here differing with Jeffrey, whose article on Scott's edition of Swift's *Works* appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* for Sept. 1816.
112. '*Shews vice her own image, etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 25.
Indignatio facit versus. 'Facit indignatio versum.' Juvenal, *Sat.* I. 79.
'*Dry as the remainder biscuit.*' *As You Like It*, II. 7. 39.
'*Reigned there and revelled.*' *Paradise Lost*, IV. 765.
'*As riches fineless.*' *Othello*, III. 3. 173.
113. *Camacho's wedding.* Part II. chap. xx.
How Friar John . . . lays about him. Gargantua, Book I., chap. xxvii.
How Panurge whines in the storm. Pantagruel, Book IV., chap. xix. *et seq.*
How Gargantua mewls. Gargantua, Book I., chap. vii.
He was a mad wag. 'Mad wag' is Falstaff's phrase for Prince Hal, 1 *King Henry IV.*, I. 2. 50. Elsewhere Hazlitt applies it to Lamb (see *Political Essays*, 'The Lay of the Laureate') and seems to confuse it with the First Gravedigger's description of Yorick.
The pieces of silver money in the Arabian Nights. The Story of the Barber's Fourth Brother.
'*Mortal consequences.*' *Macbeth*, V. 3. 5.
114. *It has been called.* See 'On Mr. Wordsworth's Excursion,' *The Round Table*, vol. IV. p. 116, and note thereto.
'*Nothing can touch him further.*' *Macbeth*, III. 2. 26.

PAGE

114. *Voltaire says.* The saying is usually attributed to Callimachus (B.C. 250). Voltaire no doubt says something to the same effect, but I have not identified it.

Voltaire's traveller. See *Histoire des Voyages de Scarmentado.*

Be wise to-day. *Night Thoughts*, I. 390–433.

115. *Zanga is a vulgar caricature.* Cf. *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, vol. IV., p. 209.

Let Europe, etc. *The Revenge*, Act V. Scene 2.

116. '*We poets in our youth*,' *etc.* Wordsworth, *Resolution and Independence*, 8.

Read the account of Collins. See Johnson's *Lives of the Poets.*

A rich distilled perfume. Unacknowledged from *Comus*, 557.

Ode to Evening. The Bell text, which Hazlitt quotes, follows that of Dodsley's *Collection*, vol. I. (1748).

118. *Hammond.* James Hammond (1710–41). See Johnson's *Lives of the Poets.* His *Love Elegies*, in imitation of Tibullus, were published posthumously.

Bell's pocket edition. *The Poets of Great Britain complete from Chaucer to Churchill.* 109 vols., 18mo., 1782.

That fine madness. Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V. I. 12.

Mr. Coleridge (in his Literary Life). '[I] felt almost as if I had been newly couched, when by Mr. Wordsworth's conversation, I had been induced to re-examine with impartial strictness Gray's celebrated Elegy.' *Biographia Literaria*, ed. Bohn, p. 19.

'*Stately heights.*' 'The stately brow of Windsor's heights.' Gray, *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College.*

'*The still sad music of humanity.*' Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey.*

The loopholes of retreat. Unacknowledged from Cowper, *The Task*, IV. 88.

'*Those reverend bedlams*,' *etc.* Unidentified.

'*Be mine to read eternal new romances.*' Letter to Richard West, Thursday, April 1742.

Don't you remember Lords —— and ——. Letter to Richard West, May 27, 1742.

Shenstone. William Shenstone (1714–63), the 'water-gruel bard' of Horace Walpole.

119. *Akenside.* Mark Akenside (1721–70), physician and poet. *The Pleasures of Imagination* was begun in his eighteenth year, and was first published in 1744.

Armstrong. John Armstrong (1709–79), also physician and poet, whose *Art of Preserving Health*, a poem in four books, was also published in 1744.

Churchill. Charles Churchill (1731–64), satirist. His *Rosciad*, in which the chief actors of the time were taken off, was published in 1761. *The Prophecy of Famine*, a Scots Pastoral, inscribed to John Wilkes, Esq., in which the Scotch are ridiculed, appeared in 1763.

Green. Matthew Green (1696–1737). *The Spleen* (1737).

Dyer. John Dyer (?1700–58), *Grongar Hill* (1727). See Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* and Wordsworth's Sonnet to him.

His lot though small. *The Traveller*, 179–80. The first 'lot,' however, should be 'feasts.'

And turn'd and look'd. 'Return'd and wept and still return'd to weep.' *The Deserted Village*, 370.

The story of the washes. Chap. VI.; the Miss Primroses' guinea, chap. X.; the pictures of the Primrose and Flamborough families, chap. XVI.; the 'gross of green spectacles, with silver rims and shagreen cases,' chap. XII.; the cosmogony, chap. XIV.

PAGE

120. *Mr. Liston.* John Liston (1776–1846). See *A View of the English Stage.*
His character of a country schoolmaster. In *The Deserted Village.*
Warton. Thomas Warton (1728–90), author of *The History of English Poetry* (1774–81). He succeeded William Whitehead as poet laureate.
'*And that green wreath,*' *etc.* Southey, *Carmen Nuptiale*, Proem, st. 9.
'*Tedious and brief.*' Cf. *All's Well that Ends Well*, II. 3, 34; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V. 1. 56.

122. *Chatterton.* Thomas Chatterton (1752–70).
Dr. Mills, etc. Dr. Jeremiah Milles (1713–84). Sir Herbert Croft (1751–1816), whose *Love and Madness*, Letter 51 (1780), may be referred to; Vicesimus Knox, D.D. (1752–1821), compiler of *Elegant Extracts* (1789).

VII. ON BURNS, AND THE OLD ENGLISH BALLADS

PAGE

123. *Dissatisfaction to some persons.* Keats, who was 'very disappointed at his treatment of Chatterton' (*Letters*, ed. Buxton Forman, 1901, IV. 80), was seeing much of Hazlitt at this date. This passage is one of the small evidences we have that their respect was mutual.
'*Unslacked of motion.*' *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1. 70, Pope's text.
Anderson. Robert Anderson, M.D. (1751–1830), editor and biographer of *British Poets.*
Mr. Malone. Edmond Malone (1741–1812), the Shakespearean editor. He did not believe, however, in the 'antiquity' of Chatterton's productions. See his 'Cursory Observations on the Poems attributed to Thomas Rowley,' 1782.
Dr. Gregory. George Gregory, D.D. (1754–1808), author of *The Life of Thomas Chatterton, with Criticisms on his Genius and Writings, and a concise view of the Controversy concerning Rowley's Poems.* 1789.

124. *Annibal Caracci.* Annibale Carracci (1560–1609). His 'Silenus teaching a Young Apollo to play on the Pipe,' which Hazlitt knew in the Angerstein Collection, is now in the National Gallery.
Essays, p. 144. The reference should be to Dr. Knox's *Essays*, No. CXLIV. (vol. iii. p. 206, 1787).

127. '*He was like a man after supper.*' 2 *King Henry IV.*, III. 2. 332.
Some one said. Cf. 'Of Persons One Would Wish to have Seen.'
'*Made him poetical.*' *As You Like It*, III. 3. 16.
'*Create a soul under the ribs of death.*' *Comus*, 562.

128. '*A brazen candlestick tuned,*' *etc.* 1 *King Henry IV.*, III. 1. 131, Pope's text.
'*Via goodman Dull,*' *etc.* *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. 1. 156.
Three most formidable enemies. Robespierre, according to *A Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns* (1816), was 'one of the vainest men that the most vain country on earth has produced.' Napoleon was 'an intoxicated despot.' 'It is a descent,' the poet goes on, in the passage alluded to by Hazlitt, 'which I fear you will scarcely pardon, to compare these redoubtable enemies of mankind with the anonymous conductor of a perishable publication.' He had just previously credited Jeffrey with 'a mind obtuse, superficial, and inept,' and said of him: 'It is notorious that this persevering Aristarch, as often as a work of original genius comes before him, avails himself of that opportunity to re-proclaim to the world the narrow range of his own comprehension.' (*Prose Works*, ed. Grosart, II. 17-18.)

129. '*Out upon this half-faced fellowship.*' 1 *King Henry IV.*, I. 3. 208.

PAGE

129. *As my Uncle Toby.* Tristram Shandy, Book VI., chap. xxxii.
  'Drunk full ofter.' etc. 'Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne she drank.' Chaucer, *Clerkes Tale*, 215–16.
  'The act and practique part,' etc. *King Henry V.*, I. I. 51.
  'The fly that sips treacle,' etc. *The Beggar's Opera*, Act II. Scene 8.

130. *'From being chilled with poverty,' etc.* Hazlitt is apparently quoting from himself. See *The Round Table*, vol. IV. p. 159.
  'Like the giddy sailor,' etc. *Richard III*, III. 4. 98–100.

131. *In a poetical epistle.* 'To a Friend Who Had Declared his Intention of Writing No More Poetry' (1796).
  'Self-love and social are the same.' Pope, *Essay on Man*, IV. 396.
  'Himself alone.' 3 *King Henry VI.*, V. 6. 83.
  If the species were continued like trees. *Religio Medici*, Part II.
  'Famous for the keeping of it up.'
  This, this was the unkindest cut. *Julius Caesar*, III. 2. 187.

132. *Launce's account of his dog Crabbe.* *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, IV. 4. 19–20.

137. *'the bosom of its* [his] *Father,' etc.* Gray, *Elegy*, 128.

139. *'The true pathos and sublime of human life.'* Burns, *Epistle to Dr. Blacklock.*
  Ferguson's songs. Robert Fergusson (1750–74), Burn's 'elder brother in the Muses.'

140. *Oh gin my love.* 'O my luv's like a red, red rose.'
  'Thoughts that often lie,' etc. Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*, concluding line.
  That passage in Don Quixote. Part II., chap. IX.
  Sir Thomas Overbury describes. See *ante*, p. 99.

141. *Archbishop Herring.* Thomas Herring (1693–1757), Archbishop of Canterbury. The passage is from his *Letters to William Duncombe, Esq.*, 1728–57 (1777), Letter XII., Sept. 11, 1739.
  Auld Robin Gray . . . Lady Ann Bothwell's lament. Lady Anne Barnard, *née* Lindsay (1750–1825), did not acknowledge her authorship of 'Auld Robin Gray' (to Sir Walter Scott) until 1823.

142. *O waly, waly.* This ballad was first published in Allan Ramsay's *Tea Table Miscellany*, 1724. There are certain differences between Hazlitt's text and that of the *Oxford Book of English Verse.*
  The Braes of Yarrow. By William Hamilton, of Bangour (1704–54).

143. *Turner's History of England.* Sharon Turner (1768–1847), *History of England from the Norman Conquest to the Death of Elizabeth* (1814–23).
  J. H. Reynolds. John Hamilton Reynolds (1794–1852). Hazlitt is quoting the sonnet (one of three by Reynolds which evoked Keats's 'Robin Hood' in answer) from *The Yellow Dwarf* of February 21, 1818. For Hazlitt's relations with Reynolds see the later volumes devoted to his journalism.

VIII. ON THE LIVING POETS

PAGE

143. *'No more of talk,' etc.* *Paradise Lost*, IX. 1–3.

146. *The Darwins, the Hayleys, the Sewards.* Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802), grandfather of Charles Darwin, and author of *The Loves of the Plants* (1789), a poem parodied by Frere in *The Anti-Jacobin* as 'The Loves of the Triangles.' William Hayley (1745–1820), who wrote *The Triumphs of Temper* and a *Life of Cowper.* Anna Seward (1747–1809), the 'Swan of Lichfield.' She wrote poetical novels, sonnets and a life of Dr. Darwin.

PAGE

146. *One of the Lyrical Ballads.* 'Yarrow Unvisited' was composed in 1803 (when Hazlitt no doubt heard it) and published in the *Poems in Two Volumes* of 1807.

'Face-making.' Cf. 'Leave thy damnable faces and begin.' *Hamlet*, III. 2. 263.

Mrs. Inchbald. Elizabeth Inchbald (1753–1821), novelist, dramatist and actress.

'Thank the Gods,' etc. Cf. *As You Like It*, III. 3. 25.

The next three volumes of the Tales of My Landlord. The Heart of Midlothian (second series of the *Tales*) was published in 1818, and the third series, consisting of *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *A Legend of Montrose*, in 1819.

147. *Or highly enough of the author.* This is one of several tributes of personal affection and respect by Hazlitt to Mary Lamb, who was the author of seven out of ten of the tales in *Mrs. Leicester's School* (1807).

Mrs. Barbauld. Anna Letitia Barbauld (1743–1825), daughter of the Rev. John Aitken, D.D., joint-author, with her brother John Aitken, of *Evenings at Home.*

Mrs. Hannah More (1745–1833). Her verses and sacred dramas were published in the first half of her life: she gradually retired from London society, and this may have led to Hazlitt's doubtful remark as to her being still alive.

Miss Baillie. Joanna Baillie (1762–1851). *Count Basil* is one of her *Plays of the Passions* (1798–1802), and is concerned with the 'passion' of love. *De Montfort* was acted at Drury Lane in 1800 by Mrs. Siddons and Kemble.

Remorse, Bertram, and lastly Fazio. Coleridge's *Remorse* (1813), for twenty nights at Drury Lane. C. R. Maturin's *Bertram* (1816), successful at Drury lane. Dean Milman's *Fazio* (1815), acted at Bath and then at Covent Garden.

'A man of no mark or likelihood.' 1 *King Henry IV.*, III. 2. 45.

'Make mouths,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV. 3. 50.

Her comedy of the Election. Lyceum Theatre, June 17, 1817. The notice in *The Times* is not Hazlitt's.

148. *Mr. Rogers's Pleasures of Memory.* Published in 1792.

The Della Cruscan. The sentimental and affected style, initiated in 1785 by some English residents at Florence, and extinguished by Gifford's satire in the *Baviad* (1794), and *Maeviad* (1796).

'To show that power of love,' etc.

> 'He knows who gave that love sublime,
> And gave that strength of feeling great
> Above all human estimate.'
>
> Wordsworth's *Fidelity.*

149. *Campbell's Pleasures of Hope.* Published in 1799, *Gertrude of Wyoming* in 1809.

Some hamlet shade, etc. *Pleasures of Hope*, I. 309–10.

Curiosa infelicitas. 'Curiosa felicitas Horatii.' *Petronius Arbiter*, § 118.

'Of outward show elaborate.' *Paradise Lost*, VIII. 538.

Tutus nimium, timidusque procellarum. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 128.

150. *'Like morning brought by night.'* *Gertrude of Wyoming*, I. xiii.

'Like Angels' visits.' *Pleasures of Hope*, Part II., 378.

Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 191.

Poetical reliability. Hazlitt objected to this word when Coleridge applied it to Southey in the *Biographia Literaria.* See his *Edinburgh Review* article, 'Coleridge's Literary Life.'

151. *'So work the honey-bees.'* *Henry V.*, I. 2. 187.

Love waves his purple light. The 'purple light of love' is Gray's, *Progress of Poesy*, 41.

NOTES

PAGE

151. *The advice of Fadladeen.* The Great Chamberlain gives the poet so much advice in the course of the prose interludes of *Lalla Rookh* that it is not easy to decide which piece in particular is intended.
  '*Around him the bees,*' *etc.* From Hazlitt's favourite song, 'Virgins are like the fair flower,' in *The Beggar's Opera*, Act I. Scene 7.
  '*Perilous stuff,*' *etc.* *Macbeth*, V. 3. 44.
152. '*Nest of spicery.*' *King Richard III.*, IV. 4. 424.
  '*Therefore to be possessed with double pomp,*' *etc.* *King John*, IV. 2. 9–16.
153. '*Nook monastic.*' *As You Like It*, III. 2. 441.
  '*He hath a demon.*' Cf. 'He hath a devil,' *St. John* x. 20.
  '*House on the wild sea.*' Coleridge's *The Piccolomini*, I. iv. 117.
  '*A curse to kill with.*' Otway, *Venice Preserved*, Act II. Scene 2.
154. *A pipe for Fortune's finger, etc.* Unacknowledged from *Hamlet*, III. 2. 75.
  The God of his idolatry. *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2. 114.
  '*Looks on tempests,*' *etc.* Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, CXVI.
  '*Great princes' favourites,*' *etc.* Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, XXV.
155. '*Their mortal consequences.*' *Macbeth*, V. 3. 5.
  The warriors in the Lady of the Lake. Canto V. 9.
  The Goblin Page. Canto II. 31.
  Mr. Westall's pictures. Richard Westall (1765–1836). He designed numerous drawings to illustrate Milton, Shakespeare, Scott, etc.
156. *Robinson Crusoe's boat.* *Robinson Crusoe*, Part I. p. 138, ed. G. A. Aitken.
  I did what little I could. See 'Mr. Wordsworth's "Excursion"' in *The Round Table*.
162. *Coryate's Crudites.* *Hastily gobled up in Five Moneths' Travells in France, etc.* (1611), by Thomas Coryate (?1577–1617).
  The present poet-laureate. Southey.
  '*Neither butress nor coign of vantage,*' *etc.* *Macbeth*, I. 6. 7.
  '*Born so high,*' *etc.* *King Richard III.*, I. 3. 263.
  '*In their train walked crowns,*' *etc.* Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, V. 2. 91.
163. *Meek daughters.* Coleridge's *The Eolian Harp.*
  '*Owls and night-ravens flew.*' Cf. 'The nightly owl or fatal raven,' *Titus Andronicus*, II. 3. 97.
  '*Degrees, priority, and place,*' *etc.* *Troilus and Cressida*, I. 3. 86.
  '*No figures nor no fantasies.*' *Julius Caesar*, II. I. 231.
  '*Trivial fond records.*' *Hamlet*, I. v. 99.
  '*The Marshal's truncheon,*' and the next quotation. *Measure for Measure*, II. 2. 59–61.
  '*Metre ballad-mongering.*' Cf. 1 *King Henry IV.*, III. 1. 129.
  A thorough adept in this school. Hazlitt is reproducing this passage from one of his 'Illustrations of the Times Newspaper' (December 22, 1816), where he makes it personal to Wordsworth. Crabb Robinson quarrelled with him on account of it (*Life of Hazlitt*, pp. 215–16), so that there would be a certain piquancy for a minority of his auditors in hearing it again. In *The Spirit of the Age*, however, he thinks better of it, and goes out of his way to allude to the passage as 'mere epigrams and *jeux-d'-esprit*, as far from truth as they are free from malice.'
  '*The bare trees and mountains bare,*' *etc.* Wordsworth, 'To my Sister.'
164. *The Anti-Jacobin Review.* Not *The Anti-Jacobin Review* (1798–1821) but *The Anti-Jacobin*, wherein will be found Canning and Frere's parodies, the best-known of which is the one on Southey's *The Widow*, entitled 'The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder.'
  When Adam delved, etc. Quoted from Southey's *Wat Tyler*, Act II. Scene I.

PAGE

164. *The Rejected Addresses.* By Horace and James Smith (1812).
Sir Richard Blackmore. See *ante*, p. 108 and note thereto.

165. '*Prosing or versing.*' Milton, *Church Government*, II., Preface.
There is no one who has a better right. He had written a year before this date (January 12, 1817) the letter to *The Examiner* on 'Mr. Coleridge's Lay Sermon' which he afterwards expanded into 'My First Acquaintance with Poets.'

166. '*Is there here any dear friend*,' *etc.* *Julius Caesar*, III. 2. 19.
'*Conceive of poetry*,' *etc.* Cf. *Measure for Measure*, IV. 2. 148–151.
One fine passage. Lines 408–30, which he had already selected for praise in his *Examiner* review of *Christabel* of June 2, 1816, and which he gave again in the copyright section of *Select Poets*. The personal application to himself and Coleridge which he saw in the lines is obvious.

167. *Schiller! that hour.* The fifth and eighth lines, as quoted, present differences from the accepted text.
I have spoken the truth elsewhere. The reference is to his reviews of Coleridge's *Lay Sermon* (December 1816) and *Biographia Literaria* (August 1817) in *The Edinburgh Review*.
'*What though the radiance*,' *etc.* *Intimations of Immortality*, 179–190. The transposition in line 182 is invariably made by Hazlitt. It is without warrant in the text of 1807, but he may have heard an earlier version.

A VIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE

Unlike the generality of dramatic critics, Hazlitt attended the theatre for twenty years before he began to write about it. Having made that start (for which see the introductory note to his journalism) he was successively and without intermission engaged in daily or weekly dramatic criticism (without prejudice to his other journalistic activities) for *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Champion*, *The Examiner*, and *The Times* for rather more than four years, from October 1813 to the end of 1817. On his retirement from the last-named, through ill-health, he collected his criticisms into this volume, but represented very inadequately, for reasons probably of copyright, his eight months' engagement on *The Times*. Articles which he omitted, and portions of articles which conveniently stand by themselves, will be found in a later volume devoted to his journalism. Otherwise, his omissions are given in the notes.

Apart from occasional friendly acts of understudying, his professional theatre-going was henceforward limited to two short periods: (1) for the purpose of a monthly article for *The London Magazine* during 1820, and (2) his resumption of *The Examiner's* theatre for a few weeks in 1828. His opening essay for *The London Magazine*, 'On Play-Going and Some of our Old Actors,' forms a convenient summary of, and pendant to, his views expressed in *A View of the English Stage*.

PAGE

173. *Rochefoucault . . . said.* *Maximes et Réflexions Morales*, cccxii.
'*The brief chronicles of the time.*' *Hamlet*, II. 2. 554.
'*Hold the mirror*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*, III. 2. 26.
'*Imitate humanity*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*, III. 2. 40.
Zoffany's pictures. John Zoffany (1733–1810), a native of Ratisbon, came to England in 1758 and soon became noted for his pictures of Garrick and other actors in character. Several of these are preserved at the Garrick Club.
Thomas Weston (1737–76). Cf. *The Life of Holcroft*, vol. III. pp. 76–77.
Colley Cibber's Life. Cf. *The English Comic Writers*, vol. VI. pp. 160–1.

174. *A perverse caricature.* Hazlitt refers to the character of Marmozet in *Peregrine Pickle* (1751). The quarrel between Garrick and Smollett was afterwards made up.

NOTES

PAGE

174. '*The secrets of the prison-house.*' *Hamlet*, I. 5. 14.

The editor of which, etc. John Walter the Second (1776–1847) the propriefor. The acting editor of *The Times* during Hazlitt's *régime* as dramatic critic was Thomas Barnes (1785–1841), who *was* a man of letters, and Hazlitt's predecessor in the dramatic criticism of *The Examiner.* He succeeded Stoddart in 1817, and held the position until his death.

Without being turned out for it. The reference is to Hazlitt's own dismissal by Perry from *The Morning Chronicle.* See the introductory note to the later volume devoted to his journalism.

Too prolix on the subject of the Bourbons. Hazlitt refers to his brother-in-law, Dr., afterwards Sir John Stoddart, who was dismissed from the acting editorship of *The Times* early in 1817, in consequence of the violence of his writings on French affairs. Stoddart immediately started *The Day and New Times*, the title of which was altered in 1818 to *The New Times.*

'*One who loved,*' *etc.* *Othello*, V. 2. 343.

I went to see him. Cf. the *Table Talk* essay, 'On Patronage and Puffing.'

175. '*Some quantity,*' *etc.* A composite quotation from *Hamlet*, III. 2. 47 and *Romeo and Juliet*, V. I. 48.

Mr. Perry. James Perry (1756–1821), proprietor and editor of *The Morning Chronicle.*

'*Screw the courage,*' *etc.* *Macbeth*, I. 7. 60.

176. '*Pritchard's genteel,*' *etc.* Churchill, *The Rosciad*, 852, the reference being to Hannah Pritchard (1711–68), the actress who played Johnson's Irene.

Swiss bodyguards. The famous corps, constituted in 1616, who had shown such fidelity to Louis XVI. during the attack on the Tuileries on August 10, 1792.

'*Pigmy body,*' *etc.* Dryden, *Absolom and Achitophel*, I. 157–58.

Note. *The Fudge family in Paris* (1818), Letter II. 116–23.

177. '*The very worst actor in the world.*' Unidentified.

The only person on the stage. This statement is curious, in view of a letter from Kean to Hazlitt sold at Sotheby's on February 26, 1906. It is of date March 30, 1816, and reads: 'Dear Hazlitt—I have met with an awkward accident. Having been hurled out of a gig, and got a dislocated arm (not to speak of divers bruises and a severe shaking), I shall be unable to appear at your dinner party, or play for some nights in the Duke of Milan.' For Kean's accident, and Hazlitt's comments thereon, see *ante*, pp. 292–94. I have not succeeded in tracing the present ownership of this letter, but there appears to be no reason to doubt its authenticity.

Liston, according to Procter, attended one or more of Lamb's 'Thursdays,' in or about 1815. Whether Hazlitt took him there, or met him there, I do not know that we know. He later knew Charles Mathews the elder, another actor-acquaintance of Lamb's; and must have met Fanny Kelly off the stage, whom he praises so generously on. An acquaintance (or meeting) with 'Master' Betty, mentioned in 'On Patronage and Puffing,' is definitely later than the present preface.

'*With the malice of a friend.*' Unidentified.

'*A master of scholars.*' O'Keefe, *The Agreeable Surprise*, Act II. Sc. 2.

178. *The Characters of Shakespear's Plays.* Of which a second edition had just been published.

179. *Mr. Kean's Shylock.* Edmund Kean (1787–1833) had already acted many important parts in the provinces. At Dorchester one of his performances had been witnessed by Arnold, the stage-manager of Drury Lane, through whom an engagement was made with the management of that theatre. Kean insisted on playing Shylock, and though the management and his fellow-actors were

PAGE

incredulous as to his powers, his success was undisputed. Henceforward his many triumphs in London were associated with the Drury Lane Theatre, except for a short period from 1827 to 1829, when his services were transferred to Covent Garden.

179. *It would be endless.* So in *The Morning Chronicle.* When Hazlitt prints the passage again (*ante*, p. 295) he, or the printer, substitutes 'needless.'

180. l. 8. Add from *The Morning Chronicle:* 'After the play we were rejoiced to see the sterling farce of *The Apprentice* revived, in which Mr. Bannister was eminently successful.' Arthur Murphy's farce, first produced in 1756.

Miss Smith. Sarah Smith, who married George Bartley, the actor, in 1814. She made her first appearance in London in 1805. She suffered by comparison with Mrs. Siddons, and later with Miss O'Neill.

Rae. Alexander Rae (1782–1820), after acting for a season at the Haymarket in 1806, made his first appearance at Drury Lane on November 12, 1812. Kean quickly eclipsed him in tragedy, though he maintained the reputation of being a good Hamlet.

'*Far-darting eye.*' Cf.

> 'And covetous of Shakspeare's beauty seen
> In every flash of his far-beaming eye.'
>
> COWPER, *The Task*, III. 601–2.

. . . *of any other actor.* Add from *The Morning Chronicle:* 'except where his ear had caught in passages the tone of the late Mr. Cooke. He stands, etc.'

181. '*But I was born so high,' etc.* *Richard III.*, I. 3. 263–65.

The miserable medley acted for Richard III. The work chiefly of Colley Cibber, published in 1700.

Cooke. George Frederick Cooke (1756–1811). His first appearance in London (Covent Garden, October 31, 1801) was in this part, which remained one of his best impersonations.

'*Stand all apart,' etc.* *Richard III.*, IV. 2. 1.

182. '*The golden rigol,' etc.* Interpolated by Cibber from 2 *Henry IV.*, IV. 5. 36.

'*Chop off his head.*' *Richard III.*, III. 1. 193.

Beautiful description of the camps. Interpolated by Cibber from *Henry V.*, IV., Prologue.

last line. Continue from *The Morning Chronicle:* 'His fall, however, was too rapid. Nothing but a sword passed through the heart could occasion such a fall. With his innate spirit of *Richard* he would struggle with his fate to the last moment of ebbing life. But on the whole the performance was the most perfect of any thing that has been witnessed since the days of Garrick. The play was got up with great skill. The scenes were all painted with strict regard to historic truth. There had evidently been research as to identity of place, for the views of the Tower, of Crosby House, etc. were, in the eye of the best judges, considered as faithful representations according to the descriptions handed down to us. The cast of the play was also good. Green-room report says that Miss Smith refused the part of the *Queen*, as not great enough *forsooth* for her superior talents, although Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Pope, Mrs. Crauford and others felt it to their honour to display their powers in the character. In the present case the absence of Miss Smith was not a misfortune, for Mrs. Glover gave to the fine scene with her children, a force and feeling that drew from the audience the most sympathetic testimonies of applause. Miss Boyce made a very

PAGE

interesting and elegant representative of *Lady Anne*. We sincerely congratulate the public on the great accession to the theatrical art which they have obtained in the talents of Mr. Kean. The experience of Saturday night convinces us that he acts from his own mental resources, and that he has organs to give effect to his comprehension of character. We never saw such admirable use made of the eye, of the lip, and generally of the muscles. We could judge of what he would have been if his voice had been clear from hoarseness; and we trust he will not repeat the difficult part till he has overcome his cold. We understand, he is shortly to appear as *Don John*, in *The Chances*. We know no character so exactly suited to his powers.'

Elizabeth Pope (1744 ?–1797) wife of Alexander Pope the actor. She made her first appearance in 1768 and became famous in a wide range of parts.

Mrs. Crauford, better known as Mrs. Barry. Ann Spranger Barry (1734–1801) first appeared at Drury Lane in 1767–8, and soon acquired a great reputation both in tragedy and comedy. She married Spranger Barry the actor in 1768.

183. '*I am myself alone.*' *Richard III.* (Cibber's version), interpolated from 3 *Henry VI.*, v. 6. 83.

'*I am not i' the vein.*' *Richard III.*, IV. 2. 122.

'*His grace looks cheerfully*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*, III. 4. 50–55.

184. '*Take him for all in all*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, I. 2. 187–88.

Mr. Wroughton. Richard Wroughton (1748–1822), the main part of whose career closed in 1798. He returned to the stage two years later, and continued to act till 1815.

Mrs. Glover. Julia Glover (1779–1850), a favourite actress who had made her first appearance in London in 1797.

'*For in the very torrent*,' *etc.* Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 2. 6–9.

Shakespear Gallery. Hazlitt refers to the well known Shakespeare Gallery projected and carried out by Alderman Boydell between 1786 and 1802.

185. *Mr. Kean's Hamlet.* Drury Lane, March 12, 1814.

'*A young and princely novice.*' *Richard III.*, I. 4. 228.

186. '*That has no relish*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, III. 3. 92.

'*That noble and liberal casuist.*' The phrase is Lamb's, 'those noble and liberal casuists,' of the Elizabethan dramatists in general, and is from a favourite passage of Hazlitt's in the *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, on Middleton and Rowley (*Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Lucas, 1912, p. 53).

'*Out of joint.*' *Hamlet*, I. 5. 188.

'*Come then*,' *etc.* Pope, *Moral Essays*, II. 17–20.

187. '*A wave of the sea.*' *The Winter's Tale*, IV. 3. 141.

'*That within*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, I. 2. 85.

'*Weakness and melancholy.*' *Ibid.*, II. 2. 630.

''*Tis I, Hamlet the Dane.*' *Ibid.*, V. I. 280–81.

188. '*I'll call thee*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*, I. 4. 44–45.

'*The rugged Pyrrhus.*' *Ibid.*, II. 2. 381.

'*Bordered on the verge*,' *etc.* Cf. 'Touch'd the brink of all we hate,' Pope, *Moral Essays*, II. 51–2.

189. *Mr. Raymond's representation*, *etc.* For Raymond, at this time acting manager at Drury Lane, see Leigh Hunt's *Critical Essays* (1807), pp. 29–32.

. . . *whine or shed tears.* Add from *The Morning Chronicle*: 'Miss Smith's Ophelia excited a high degree of interest, and was applauded as it deserved.'

Mr. Dowton. William Dowton (1764–1851), one of the chief comedians of the Drury Lane company, made his first appearance in London in 1796 and retired in 1840. He is on Hazlitt's 'select' list in his *London Magazine* essay.

PAGE

189. *'Flows on to the Propontic,' etc.* *Othello*, III. 3. 445–46. The following quotations are from the same scene.

The rest of the play, etc. Pope played Iago, Miss Smith Desdemona and Mrs. Glover Emilia.

190. *'A consummation,' etc.* *Hamlet*, III. 1. 71.

Antony and Cleopatra. This version was attributed to Kemble.

191. *'The barge,' etc.* *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. 2. 196–97.

192. *'He's speaking now,' etc.* *Ibid.*, I. 5. 24–25.

'It is my birth-day,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 13. 185–87.

Mr. Young. See *post*, note to p. 235.

Mrs. Faucit. Harriet Faucit, the mother of Helen Faucit, had made her first appearance, on October 7, as Desdemona.

Mr. Terry. Daniel Terry (1870?–1829), who appeared in Edinburgh in 1809 and in London in 1813. He is chiefly remembered as an intimate friend and correspondent of Sir Walter Scott, many of whose novels he adapted for the stage.

Artaxerxes. An English Opera. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden. The Musick Composed by Tho. Aug. Arne, Mus. Doc. (1763). The opera was produced in 1762. The words were translated from Metastasio's 'Artaserse.'

Miss Stephens. Catharine Stephens (1794–1882), a great favourite with Hazlitt, who here notices her first important appearance on the stage. She was popular not only on the stage but in the concert-room. She retired in 1835 and in 1838 married the fifth earl of Essex.

'The soldier, tired.' Act III. Sc. 10.

'Let not rage,' etc. Act III. Sc. 5.

'What was my pride,' etc. From the song, 'If o'er the cruel tyrant love,' Act II. Sc. 6, which, as sung by Miss Stephens, ranks with Hazlitt's favourites from *The Beggar's Opera*.

193. *Catalani.* Angelica Catalani (1779–1849), the greatest *prima donna* of her time, frequently sang in London between 1806 and 1824.

Mr. Liston's acting, etc. Cf. *The English Comic Writers*, vol. VI. pp. 159–60.

The Beggar's Opera. See the essay 'On Patronage and Puffing' in *Table-Talk* (vol. VIII. pp. 292–93), where Hazlitt gives an account of the writing of this article, which he had already reproduced in his *Lectures on the English Poets* (*ante*, pp. 107–8) and in *The Round Table*. See vol. IV. pp. 65–66 and notes.

194. *'Cease your funning.'* *The Beggar's Opera*, Act II. Sc. 13.

195. *Described by Molière.* In *La Critique de l'École des Femmes*, Sc. 6.

Mrs. Liston's person. Miss Tyer (d. 1854), who married Liston in 1807, was of diminutive stature. She retired from the stage when her husband left Covent Garden in 1822.

Richard Cœur de Lion. The version (1786) by General Burgoyne of Sedaine's *Richard Cœur de Lion*, produced in Paris in 1784.

Oh, Richard! etc. This song in the original opera 'O Richard! O mon Roi!' had enjoyed great popularity in France before the Revolution.

196. *Miss Foote.* Maria Foote (1797?–1867). Some circumstances of her private life, alluded to by Hazlitt elsewhere, increased her popularity with the public. She retired in 1831, and in the same year married the fourth Earl of Harrington.

Amanthis. In Mrs. Inchbald's *Child of Nature*.

'Youthful poet's fancy,' etc. Rowe, *The Fair Penitent*, Act III. Sc. 1.

The Opera. Hazlitt expresses more fully his 'imperfect sympathy' with this art form in his *Yellow Dwarf* paper, 'The Opera.' See the later volumes devoted to his journalism.

NOTES

PAGE

197. *Madame Grassini.* Josephina Grassini (1773–1850), a contralto singer who first appeared in London in 1803.

'*Might create,' etc.* *Comus*, 562.

Signor Tramezzani. A favourite Italian tenor who was not a favourite with Hazlitt.

198. *The Genius of Scotland.* Hazlitt is perhaps thinking of Sir Pertinax Macsycophant in Macklin's *The Man of the World*, who 'always booed, and booed, and booed, as it were by instinct.' (Act III. Sc. 1.)

M. Vestris. This sentence in *The Champion* reads: 'M. Vestris, who made an able-bodied representative of *Zephyr* in the ballet, appears to us to be the Conway among dancers.' For Mr. Conway see below.

Miss O'Neill's Juliet. Eliza O'Neill (1791–1872), afterwards Lady Becher. Hazlitt is here noticing her London *début*. She very quickly made a reputation as a tragic actress second only to Mrs. Siddons', and on her marriage in 1819 retired from the stage.

The Gamester, etc. Edward Moore's tragedy, first produced in 1753.

199. *Palmer.* John Palmer (1742?–1798), 'Plausible Jack,' the original Joseph Surface. See Lamb's 'On Some of the Old Actors,' and Hazlitt's *London Magazine* essay.

Isabella. In *Isabella; or the Fatal Marriage* (1758), Garrick's version of Thomas Southerne's *The Fatal Marriage* (1694).

A modern dashing orator. Hazlitt himself uses the words—as, apparently, his own—in his character of Rousseau (*The Round Table*, vol. IV. p. 91).

200. '*And Romeo banished.*' *Romeo and Juliet*, III. 2. 112.

'*Festering in his shroud.*' *Ibid.*, IV. 3. 43.

'*The last scene,' etc.* I.e. in Garrick's version (1750).

'*I have forgot,' etc.* *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2. 171.

Mr. Jones's Mercutio. Richard Jones (1779–1851), known as 'Gentleman Jones.'

Of Mr. Conway's Romeo, etc. Continue this paragraph as follows from *The Champion*:

'His acting is a nuisance to the stage. The tolerating such a performer in principal parts is a disgrace to the national character. We saw several foreigners laughing with mischievous delight at this monstrous burlesque of the character of Romeo. He bestrides the stage like a Colossus, throws his arms into the air like the sails of a windmill, and his motion is as unwieldy as that of a young elephant. His voice breaks in thunder on the ear like Gargantua's, but when he pleases to be soft, he is "the very beadle to an amorous sigh." A contemporary critic has said, "What a pity that the thing can speak!" We should add, "What a pity that it is seen!" Mr. Coates's absurdities are tame and trifling in comparison. There is, we suppose, no reason why this preposterous phenomenon should not be at once discarded from the stage, but for the suppressed titter of secret satisfaction which circulates through the dress-boxes whenever he appears. Why does he not marry?'

William Augustus Conway (1789–1828), who first appeared in London in 1813, will be found figuring frequently in Hazlitt's dramatic criticism, and never favourably. On reprinting the above passage, he modified it in the manner shown; but presumably the book came under the notice of the actor as the journal had not. The following is from *The Theatrical Inquisitor* for May 1818:

'Some expressions in my *View of the English Stage* relating to Mr. Conway, having been construed to imply personal disrespect to that gentleman, and to

PAGE

hold him up to ridicule, not as an actor but as a man, I utterly disclaim any such intention or meaning, in the work alluded to, the whole of what is there said being strictly intended to apply to his appearance in certain characters on the stage, and to his qualifications or defects as a candidate for theatrical approbation.

'W. Hazlitt.'

'*May* 24, 1818.'

Blackwood's Magazine, in its attack on Hazlitt ('Hazlitt Cross-Questioned') in August of the same year, made one of its charges against him that he 'wantonly and grossly and indecently insulted Mr. Conway the actor, and published a Retracting Lie in order to escape a caning.' For Hazlitt's answer see *A Reply to Z.* Conway's later career appears to have been unfortunate. He continued to act in London and at Bath (sometimes playing important parts) till 1821. In 1823 he went to America, where, after acting and delivering religious discourses, he drowned himself in 1828.

'*The very beadle,' etc.* *Love's Labour's Lost*, III. 1. 177, Pope's text.

Mr. Coates's absurdities. Robert Coates (1772–1848), the wealthy 'Amateur of Fashion,' who was known as 'Romeo Coates' from his representations of Romeo, the first of which took place at Bath in 1810.

Mr. Kean's Richard. Drury Lane, October 3, 1814.

201. '*Chop off his head.*' See *ante*, note to p. 182.

'*I fear no uncles,' etc.* *Richard III.*, III. 1. 193.

203. '*Inexplicable dumb show and noise.*' *Hamlet*, III. 2. 14.

Captain Barclay. Robert Barclay Allardice (1779–1854), generally known as 'Captain Barclay,' famous for his feats of pedestrianism.

204. '*With her best nurse,' etc.* *Comus*, 377–80.

Mr. Kean's Macbeth. November 5, 1814.

205. '*Real hearts,' etc.* Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (ed. Payne, p. 101).

Macbeth and Richard the Third. Add from *The Champion* a footnote: 'See an admirable analysis of the two characters by the author of an Essay on Ornamental Garden.' Cf. *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, vol. IV. p. 171 and note.

'*Fate and metaphysical aid.*' *Macbeth*, I. 5. 30.

206. '*Direness is thus,' etc.* *Ibid.*, V. 5. 14.

'*Troubled with thick-coming fancies.*' *Ibid.*, V. 3. 38.

'*Subject* [servile] *to all the skyey influences.*' *Measure for Measure* III. 1. 9.

207. '*Lost too poorly in himself.*' *Macbeth*, II. 2. 71–72.

'*My way of life,' etc.* *Ibid.*, V. 3. 22–23.

'*Then, oh farewell,' etc.* *Othello*, III. 3. 348.

'*To consider too curiously.*' *Hamlet*, V. 1. 226.

208. *Mr. Kean's Romeo.* January 2, 1815.

'*Added a cubit,' etc.* *St. Matthew* vi. 27.

'*As musical,' etc.* *Comus*, 477.

Luke. In Sir James Bland Burgess's *Riches; or, The Wife and Brother*, founded on Massinger's *The City Madam*, produced in 1810.

209. *Garrick and Barry.* Garrick and Spranger Barry (1719–77) were rival Romeos. In 1750 the play was acted twelve consecutive nights both at Drury Lane and Covent Garden.

'*The silver sound,' etc.* 'How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,' *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2. 166.

210. '*What said my man,' etc.* *Ibid.*, V. 3. 76 *et seq.*

Mrs. Beverley. In Edward Moore's *The Gamester.*

NOTES

PAGE

211\. '*As one,' etc.* *Hamlet*, III. 2.

l. 36. Add from *The Champion :*

'To return to Mr. Kean. We would, if we had any influence with him, advise him to give one thorough reading to Shakespeare, without any regard to the prompt-book, or to his own cue, or to the effect he is likely to produce on the pit or gallery. If he does this, not with a view to his profession, but as a study of human nature in general, he will, we trust, find his account in it, quite as much as in keeping company with "the great vulgar, or the small." [1] He will find there all that he wants, as well as all that he has :—sunshine and gloom, repose as well as energy, pleasure mixed up with pain, love and hatred, thought, feeling, and action, lofty imagination, with point and accuracy, general character with particular traits, and all that distinguishes the infinite variety of nature. He will then find that the interest of *Macbeth* does not end with the dagger scene, and that *Hamlet* is a fine character in the closet, and might be made so on the stage, *by being understood.* He may then hope to do justice to Shakespeare, and when he does this, he need not fear but that his fame will last.'

Mr. Kean's Iago. The whole of this first paper had been previously reproduced by Hazlitt in *The Round Table.* See vol. IV. pp. 14-17 and the notes thereto.

212\. *Persist in the objection we before made.* *Ante*, p. 190. In *The Examiner* this phrase reads : 'adopt the opinion of a cotemporary critic.'

In contempt of mankind. Cf. 'In contempt of the choice of the people,' Hazlitt's paraphrase of Burke's well-known views on Monarchy (*Reflections on the French Revolution*, ed. Payne, p. 17).

213\. *Reason as a pander.* Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 4. 88.

214\. *Plausibility of a confessor.* *The Examiner* has the following note on this passage : 'Iago is a Jesuit out of orders, and ought to wear black. Mr. Kean had on a red coat (certainly not "*the costume of his crime*," which is hypocrisy), and conducted the whole affair with the easy intrepidity of a young volunteer officer, who undertakes to seduce a bar-maid at an inn.'

215\. '*Who has that breast so pure,' etc.* *Othello*, III. 3. 138–41.

216\. '*What a full fortune,' etc.* *Ibid.*, I. 1. 66–73.

'*Here is her father's house,' etc.* *Ibid.*, I. 1. 74–77.

Ode to Indifference. 'Prayer for Indifference.' By Mrs. Frances Greville, Fanny Burney's godmother. Three stanzas of the sixteen of the poem are in *The Oxford Book of English Verse.*

'*What is the reason,' etc.* *Othello*, I. 1. 89–92.

217\. '*I cannot believe,' etc.* *Ibid.*, II. 1. 254–58.

'*And yet how nature,' etc.* *Ibid.*, III. 3. 227–33.

'*Nearly are allied,' etc.* Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, I. 163–64.

'*Who knows all quantities* [qualities],' *etc.* *Othello*, III. 3. 259–60. In *The Examiner* a footnote was appended to this passage, which will be found separately printed in the later volumes devoted to Hazlitt's journalism.

218\. '*Oh gentle lady,' etc.* *Othello*, II. 1. 119–20.

'*The milk of human kindness.*' *Macbeth*, I. 5. 18.

'*Least relish of salvation,' etc.* *Hamlet*, III. 3. 92.

'*Oh, you are well tuned now,' etc.* *Othello*, II. 1. 202–4.

'*Though in the trade of war,' etc.* *Ibid.*, I. 2. 1–10. Add from *The Examiner*, at the conclusion of this quotation :

'Now we conceive that this speech, watered with a few tears, ought to be spoken with the tremulous, weighty suspense of a Lord Chancellor, at hawk and

[1] Cowley, Horace, *Odes*, III. 1.

PAGE

buzzard between his conscience and his interest. Mr. Kean did it as indifferently as an attorney's clerk. There was nothing extra-official in his manner. But the part,' etc.

219. '*Comes the tug of war.*' 'When Greeks joined Greeks, then was the tug of war.' Lee, *The Rival Queens*, Act IV. Sc. 2.

'*My noble lord,' etc.* *Othello*, III. 3. 93–124.

'*It is not written in the bond.*' *The Merchant of Venice*, IV. I.

220. '*Though I perchance,' etc.* *Othello*, III. 3. 145–48. The next three quotations are from the same scene.

221. '*Work on,' etc.* *Ibid.*, IV. I. 45–48.

'*How is it, General,' etc.* *Ibid.*, IV. I. 60–61.

'*Look on the tragic loading,' etc.* *Ibid.*, V. 2. 363.

l. 30. Add from *The Examiner* a footnote :

'It is proper to observe, for the sake of consistency, that this and the former article on the same subject were not written by the ingenious and able critic who contributes the general theatrical article to this paper.' For the controversy between Thomas Barnes and Hazlitt regarding *Othello*, Leigh Hunt intervening, see the later volumes devoted to Hazlitt's journalism.

Mr. Kean's Richard II. Shakespeare's play with considerable alterations and additions (by Wroughton), produced March 9, 1815, and acted thirteen times. This is the first paper which Hazlitt wrote as regular dramatic critic of *The Examiner*.

222. '*Inexpressible* [inexplicable] *dumb-show and noise.*' *Hamlet*, III. 2. 14.

'*Segnius per aures,' etc.* Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 180.

223. '*Overdone or come tardy off.*' *Hamlet*, III. 2. 28.

'*Food for the critics.*' Unidentified.

Not equal truth or purity of style. In *The Examiner* : 'no general truth or purity of style.'

224. '*Why on thy knee,' etc.* *Richard II.*, III. 3. 190–95.

'*Oh that I were a mockery king,' etc.* *Ibid.*, IV. I. 260–62.

The Editor of this Paper. Leigh Hunt on his release from his two years' imprisonment saw Kean as Richard III. and wrote a criticism in *The Examiner* (February 26, 1815) to which Hazlitt refers.

Mr. Pope. Alexander Pope (1763–1835) from 1785 till 1827 acted an immense number of parts both at Drury Lane and Covent Garden.

Mr. Holland. Charles Holland (1768–1849?), nephew of the better known Charles Holland (1733–1769), Garrick's friend, first appeared at Drury Lane in 1796.

Tacked on to the conclusion. Continue from *The Examiner* : 'for Mrs. Bartley to rant and whine in.'

Mr. Arnold. Samuel James Arnold (1774–1852) in 1809 opened the Lyceum Theatre as the English Opera House, of which he was manager for many years. He was manager at Drury Lane from 1812 to 1815.

225. '*More bonoured,' etc.* *Hamlet*, I. 4. 16.

Mr. Kelly. Michael Kelly (1764?–1826), after singing abroad chiefly in Italy and Vienna, first appeared in 1787 at Drury Lane of which he became musical director.

Mr. Braham. John Abraham, or Braham, tenor singer (1774–1856).

226. *Mr. Phillips.* Thomas Philipps (1774–1841), the composer, who first appeared in London in 1796.

Mrs. Dickons. Maria Dickons (1770?–1833) appeared at Covent Garden as Miss Poole (her maiden name) in 1793. She joined the Drury Lane company in 1811 and retired about 1820.

PAGE

226. *Miss Kelly.* Frances Maria Kelly (1790–1882), a niece of Michael Kelly, appeared at Drury Lane as early as 1798 and was chiefly associated with that theatre during her long career as an actress. She refused an offer of marriage from Charles Lamb, and is linked with our own time by her building of the existing Royalty Theatre. The present volume shows how greatly Hazlitt admired her acting. See also his *London Magazine* essay.
    Mr. Knight. Edward Knight (1774–1826), 'Little Knight,' a regular member of the Drury Lane company from 1812.
227. *Love in Limbo.* By J. G. Millingen.
    Zembuca. Zembuca, or the Net-Maker and his Wife, by Isaac Pocock.
    Mr. Kean's Zanga. At Drury Lane, May 24, 1815.
    The Revenge. By Edward Young, produced in 1721.
228. '*I knew you could not bear it.*' Act IV. Sc. I.
    '*And so is my revenge.*' Act V. Sc. 2.
    Oxberry. William Oxberry (1784–1824), one of the regular Drury Lane comedians. His *Dramatic Biography* (5 vols. 1820–26) was edited after his death by his widow. To the series of acting editions (later Lacy's) issued in his name in 1818 and onwards under the title of *The New English Drama*, Hazlitt contributed sixteen prefaces, for which see a later volume of the present edition.
229. *Mr. Bannister's Farewell.* June 1, 1815.
    The World. By James Kenney, produced in 1808.
    The Children in the Wood. By Thomas Morton, music by Dr. Samuel Arnold, produced in 1793.
    Mr. Gattie. Henry Gattie (1774–1844), a member of the Drury Lane company from 1813 till his retirement in 1833.
    The Honey-Moon. By John Tobin (1770–1804), produced in 1805.
    Mrs. Davison. Maria Rebecca Davison (1780?–1858) appeared at Drury Lane (as Miss Duncan) in 1804, and was chiefly associated with that theatre for a number of years.
    Decamp. See *post*, note to p. 247.
    We do not wonder, etc. This passage to the end is in *The Round Table.* See vol. IV. pp. 155–56 and notes.
230. *Comus.* Produced April 28, 1815, and acted fourteen times.
    '*Old prize-fighting stage.*' Unidentified.
231. '*Of mask and antique pageantry.*' *L'Allegro*, 128.
    '*A marvellous proper man.*' *Richard III.*, I. 2. 256.
    Mr. Duruset. J. B. Durusett, tenor singer.
    '*Magic circle.*' Cf.

> 'But Shakespear's magic could not copied be;
> Within that circle none durst walk but he.'
> Dryden, Prologue to *The Tempest*, 19–20.

    '*This evening late,' etc.* *Comus*, 540 *et seq.*
232. '*Two such I saw,' etc.* *Ibid.*, 291 *et seq.*
233. '*Royal fortitude.*'

> '———whose mind ensued,
> Through perilous war, with regal fortitude.'

Wordsworth's Sonnet, 'November, 1813,' published in the *Collected Poems* 1815. In the footnote Hazlitt perhaps intended to refer to the omission of 'The Evening Walk' (1793), which was not republished till 1837. Five out of the original twenty stanzas of 'The Female Vagrant' were omitted.

PAGE

233. Note. Add from *The Examiner*, after 'his royal fortitude'—' and (somewhat prematurely) on the triumphs resulting from it.' Waterloo (fought June 18) may be credited with the omission on reprinting.

Mr. Kean's Leon. June 20, 1815, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife.*

. . . *acted and looked it too well.* Add from *The Examiner:*

'To borrow an expression from the delicacy of the Irish bar, his representation of it became exceedingly *tawdry*, or, in common English, indecent. At the same time,' etc.

234. *Mr. Bartley.* George Bartley (1782?–1858) first appeared at Drury Lane in 1802, and became manager of Covent Garden in 1829.

. . . *not satisfied with his performance.* Add from *The Examiner:*

'"The reason why I cannot tell—
But I don't like you, Doctor Fell." [1]

This is the worst of all possible arguments for us to use as critics; and it would not be mending the matter much to say that there is a thinness in his voice,' etc.

'*Double deafness.*' Cf. 'But yield to double darkness nigh at hand.' *Samson Agonistes*, 593.

The Shakespear Gallery. See *ante*, note to p. 184.

235. '*The gay creatures,' etc.* *Comus*, 299.

Messrs. Young, etc. Charles Mayne Young (1777–1856), who succeeded Kemble as the chief tragedian at Covent Garden, and retired in 1832; William Abbott (1789–1843), a member of the Covent Garden company for many years from 1812; John Emery (1777–1822), one of the best actors of his time, especially in rustic parts, associated almost entirely with Covent Garden from 1798 till his death; Sarah Booth (1793–1867), who first appeared at Covent Garden in 1810.

'*Tis much.*' *Cymbeline*, I. 6. 79.

236. *Airy shapes, etc.* Cf. *Paradise Lost*, I. 775 *et seq.*

Mr. Grimaldi's Orson. In *Valentine and Orson*, the part in which Joseph Grimaldi (1779–1837) made his first appearance (1806) at Covent Garden.

'*Tricksy spirit.*' *The Tempest*, V. I. 226.

237. *Mrs. Bland.* Maria Theresa Bland (1769–1838), who made her first appearance at Drury Lane (as Miss Romanzini) in 1786. Hazlitt heard her in Liverpool, in the same bill with Dignum and Suett, 'in the year 1792, the first time I ever was at a play.' See the *Plain Speaker* dialogue, 'The New School of Reform.' The year, however, may have been 1790.

'*After the songs of Apollo.*' *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. 2. 941.

My Wife! What Wife? By E. S. Barrett, produced July 25, 1815.

'*Keep such a dreadful pudder,' etc.* *King Lear*, III. 2. 50.

238. '*Good Mr. Tokely,' etc.* Cf. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, II. 2. 170. James Tokeley appeared at Drury Lane in 1813, and died January 9, 1819.

'*In the likeness of a sigh.*' *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 1. 8.

'*And looks like a jackdaw,' etc.* Unidentified.

239. *Mr. Meggett.* This actor from Edinburgh made his first appearance at the Haymarket on July 19, 1815.

The Mountaineers. By George Colman the younger, produced in 1795.

Mr. Harley's Fidget. In *The Boarding House*, a musical farce by Samuel Beazley (1786–1851), first produced on August 26, 1811.

[1] Thomas Brown's epigram (1663–1704).

PAGE

239. *Mr. Harley.* John Pritt Harley (1786–1858) made his first appearance in London at the English Opera House in July, 1815. Soon afterwards he joined the company at Drury Lane, where he remained till 1835, and made a great reputation as a comic actor and singer.

The Blue Stocking. Thomas Moore's *M.P., or the Blue-Stocking* (1811).

240. *Mr. Wallack.* James William Wallack (1791?–1864), a versatile actor well known for many years both in London and America.

Mrs. Harlowe. Sarah Harlowe (1765–1852), a low comedy actress who first appeared at Covent Garden in 1790.

'*Warbled,' etc.* Cf. 'In amorous ditties all a summer's day.' *Paradise Lost*, I. 449.

'*As one incapable,' etc.* *Hamlet*, IV. 7. 179.

The Iron Chest. By George Colman the younger, produced by Kemble in 1796.

241. *The Squire of Dames.* *The Faerie Queene*, Book III. Canto VII. The giantess was Argante.

Mr. Capel Lofft. Capell Lofft (1751–1824), constitutional lawyer and political reformer, who, with other English liberals, opposed the sending of Napoleon to St. Helena. The letter referred to by Hazlitt, in answer to one by Lofft, appeared in *The Morning Chronicle* of August 3, 1815.

Mr. Foote. An actor from Edinburgh who had made his first appearance in London on July 18, 1815.

242. *With good emphasis and discretion.* Cf. 'With good accent and good discretion.' *Hamlet*, II. 2. 489.

Mr. Gyngell. Gyngell's 'Exhibition of the original Fantoccini, the Microcosm, the Moving Panorama,' etc. was on view at this time at the theatre in Catherine Street.

Living in London. By R. F. Jameson, produced August 5, 1815.

'*Want of decency,' etc.* The Earl of Roscommon's *Essay on Translated Verse*, 114.

243. *Quod sic, etc.* Cf. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 188.

The King's Proxy. By Samuel James Arnold.

Plato. *The Republic*, Book VII.

244. *Mr. and Mrs. T. Cooke.* Thomas Simpson Cooke (1782–1848), who composed the music for *The King's Proxy*.

Fawcett. John Fawcett (1769–1837), for many years manager of Covent Garden, and the subject of Manning's confusion when Hazlitt, in 1805, was rumoured to be writing the life of his early friend, the Rev. Joseph Fawcett.

l. 23. *The Examiner* proceeds to quote from *The Morning Chronicle* a favourable notice of a new musical farce (by E. P. Knight) entitled *A Chip of the Old Block, or, The Village Festival*, and adds: 'This account is from the *Chronicle*. It is much too favourable. The piece is one of the most wretched we have seen. A statute fair would be more entertaining. The political claptraps were so barefaced as to be hissed. Matthews sung a song with that kind of humour and effect of which our readers will easily form an idea.'

The Maid and the Magpie. Arnold's version, produced August 21, 1815.

245. *The Hypocrite.* By Isaac Bickerstaffe, first produced in 1768.

Good emphasis and discretion. *Ante*, note to p. 242.

. . . *confounds his auditors.* Add from *The Examiner*:

'Any one, for instance, who is an admirer of the political oratory of Lord Castlereagh, might be supposed to be taken in by the Tartuffe. We have really paid the talents of his Lordship a compliment which we did not intend, but we will not retract it.'

246. '*Sleek o'er his rugged looks.*' *Macbeth*, III. 2. 27.

PAGE

246. *Major Sturgeon.* In Foote's *The Mayor of Garratt.*

Mrs. Orger. Mary Ann Orger (1788–1849) appeared at Drury Lane in 1808. She was the wife of Thomas Orger, a Quaker.

247. *designs against the state.* Add from *The Examiner* the following footnote: 'The *exposé* contained in the *Tartuffe* certainly did a great deal to shake the power of priestcraft and hypocrisy in France. The wits and philosophers of the two last centuries laboured hard to destroy "Popery and Slavery." The wits and philosophers of the present age are labouring as hard to restore them. We wonder the Editor of *The Times* does not set his "royal and Christian" face against the *Tartuffe*, as an abominable and sacrilegious performance, and commission Blucher to destroy *the statue or statues of Moliere, if such there be!*'

For a specimen of Dr. Stoddart's leader-writing, see a *Morning Chronicle* paper by Hazlitt, 'The Fine Arts—The Louvre.'

'Has honours,' etc. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, II. 5. 160.

Mr. Decamp. De Camp (Mrs. Charles Kemble's brother) played Isidore in *Remorse.*

Mr. Coleridge's tragedy of Remorse. Produced at Drury Lane, January 23, 1813. We know from this reference that Hazlitt saw it. See the note on his association with *The Morning Chronicle* in the later volume devoted to his journalism.

Mr. Edwards's Richard III. September 25, 1815.

'Sole sway and sovereignty.' Cf. 'Give solely sovereign sway.' *Macbeth*, I. 5. 71.

248. *The two delightful airs.* See notes *ante*, p. 192.

Mr. Incledon. Charles Incledon (1763–1826), the tenor, a good singer but a bad actor, appeared at Covent Garden from 1790 till 1815.

last line. Add from *The Examiner:*

'We have not yet seen Mrs. Dobbs nor Mrs. Mardyn.' Mrs. Dobbs, 'from York,' made her debut at Covent Garden as Letitia Hardy in *The Belle's Stratagem* on September 15. For Mrs. Mardyn see the succeeding article, and Hazlitt's dramatic criticism *passim.*

249. *Lover's Vows.* Mrs. Inchbald's version of Kotzebue's *Natural Son*, first produced at Covent Garden, 1798, revived at Drury Lane, September 26, 1815.

Mrs. Mardyn. Mrs. Mardyn had been very successful in Dublin. A false report was afterwards spread that she had eloped with Byron. See Byron's *Letters and Journals* (ed. Prothero), III. 217.

Mr. Dowton . . . for the first time. October 5, 1815.

'Merry jest.' *Titus Andronicus*, v. 2. 175.

250. *Mr. Lovegrove.* William Lovegrove (1778–1816), who made his reputation at Bath, and appeared in London in 1810.

Wewitzer. Ralph Wewitzer (1748–1825), who had had a long career, chiefly in secondary parts. This was one of his last appearances.

l. 18. Add from *The Examiner:*

'The new farce [at Covent Garden, October 5, 1815], called *The Farce-Writer*, has been very successful; we wish we could add deservedly so. It is a happy instance of lively dulness. The wit consists entirely in the locomotion of the actors. It is a very badly written pantomime.'

The School for Scandal. September 27, 1815.

Little Simmons. Samuel Simmons (1777?–1819), a regular member of the Covent Garden company from 1796, and very successful as a comedian. Moses in *The School for Scandal* was one of his parts.

'Cast some longing,' etc. Cf. Gray's *Elegy*, 88.

NOTES

PAGE

251. *Mr. Blanchard.* William Blanchard (1769–1835), one of the Covent Garden comedians.

Mr. Farley. Charles Farley (1771–1859), actor, dramatist, and stage-manager.

last line. Continue from *The Examiner :*

'Miss O'Neill has resumed her engagement at this house, and plays her usual characters to crowded audiences with even increased effect. We should attempt to describe her excellency in some of them, but that we feel ourselves unable to do her even tolerable justice.'

252. *Mrs. Alsop's Rosalind.* Covent Garden, October 18, 1815. Mrs. Alsop did not continue long on the stage. She was the daughter of Mrs. Jordan and Richard Daly, the Irish theatrical manager. For Dorothea Jordan (1762–1816), one of the greatest of English comic actresses, and for long the mistress of the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William IV, see Hazlitt's dramatic criticism *passim*, and particularly his *London Magazine* essay.

'No more like,' etc. Cf. *Hamlet*, I. 2. 152.

Her Nell. In *The Devil to Pay, or the Wives Metamorphosed.* By Charles Coffey (d. 1745), produced in 1731.

The Will. By Frederick Reynolds, produced in 1797.

253. *John Du Bart.* October 25, 1815. The piece, attributed to Pocock, seems to have been founded on an exploit of the French naval hero, Jean Barth (1651–1702).

That which took place in Hyde Park. The reference is to the Thanksgiving Jubilee, which took place in London on August 1, 1814, and following days. Part of the programme consisted of a sham fight on the Serpentine.

254. *Mr. Bishop.* Afterwards Sir Henry Rowley Bishop (1786–1855), the composer.

'Guns, drums,' etc. Pope, *Satires*, I. 26.

The Beggar's Opera. October 28, 1815.

Miss Nash. Miss Nash had played Polly at Bath, November 4, 1813.

Delight and admiration. Add from *The Examiner :* 'We are sorry we cannot go to see it again on Monday, when Miss Stephens appears in the part of Polly, as Mr. Kean comes out in *Bajazet* on that night.'

255. *Mrs. Davenport.* Mary Ann Davenport (1765?–1843) first appeared at Covent Garden in 1794.

256. l. 15. Add from *The Examiner :*

'A new farce has been brought out at Drury-Lane in the course of the week, called *Twenty per Cent.* It has succeeded very well. A voluble lying knave of a servant in it by Mr. Harley, who plays this class of characters well, is its chief attraction. It is deficient in plot, but not without pleasantry. It is improbable, lively, and short.' The farce was by T. Dibdin.

Miss O'Neill's Elwina. Covent Garden, November 11. Hannah More's *Percy* was produced in 1778.

257. *A parcel of tall opaque words.* Cf. vol. VIII. p. 243.

There is one word short, etc. 'Fudge.' *The Vicar of Wakefield*, chap. xi.

258. l. 24. Continue from *The Examiner :*

'Miss Stephens has appeared twice in *Polly*, and once in *Rosetta*. She looks better than she did last year, and, if possible, sings better. Of the new Farce at Drury-Lane [*Who's Who? or The Double Imposture*], we have only room to add, that there is one good scene in it, in which Munden and Harley made a very grotesque contrast, with some tolerable equivoques; all the rest is a tissue of the most tedious and gross improbabilities. The author's wit appeared to have been *elicited and expended* in the same moment.' The phrase 'elicited and expended' is that of the *Times* critic, in the quotation with which the article opens (*ante*, p. 256).

PAGE

258. *Where to Find a Friend.* By R. Leigh, produced at Drury Lane November 23, 1815.

260. *Johnstone.* John Henry Johnstone (1749–1828), a member of the Drury Lane company from 1803 to 1820. He began his career as a singer.
  '*The milk of human kindness.*' *Macbeth*, I. v. 18.

261. *Cymon.* Garrick's play was produced in 1767.
  '*Sweet Passion of Love*,' Act III. Sc. 2.
  '*It is silly sooth*,' *etc.* *Twelfth Night*, II. 4. 47–48.
  '*Now I am seventy-two.*' *Cymon*, Act II. Sc. 3.
  '*Split the ears*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*. III. 2. 12.

262. *What's a Man of Fashion?* By Frederick Reynolds.

263. '*With pleased attention*,' *etc.* Collins on Fletcher, *Epistle to Sir Thomas Hanmer*, 59–63.
  '*Where did you rest last night?*' *The Orphan*, Act IV. Sc. 3.
  '*A cubit from his stature.*' Cf. *St. Matthew* vi. 27.
  l. 24. Add from *The Examiner*:
  'The new musical farce of *Bobinet the Bandit* had nothing good in it but Mr. Liston. Mr. Tokely played the part of Fierabras as well as such a character could be played. We saw no reason for the disapprobation which was expressed at some parts of it.'
  The Honey-Moon. By John Tobin (1805).
  Duke and no Duke. The title of a farce by Nahum Tate (1685).
  '*He still plays the dog.*' Cf. 3 *Henry VI.*, v. 6. 77.
  last line. *The Examiner* adds:
  'Mrs. Marden [Mardyn] played *Miss Hoyden* on Wednesday in the admirable comedy of the *Trip to Scarborough*. She seemed to consult her own genius in it less than the admonitions of some critics. There was accordingly less to find fault with, but we like her better when she takes her full swing.

> "If to her share some trifling errors fall,
> Look in her face, and you'll forget them all." [1]

  Mr. Penley's *Lord Foppington* had very considerable merit.'

264. *The Merchant of Bruges.* A version by Douglas Kinnaird, Byron's friend, of Fletcher's comedy, *The Beggar's Bush*.
  '*Said or sung.*' Cf. *post*, note to p. 371.
  '*That every petty lord*,' *etc.* For this and the other passages quoted see *The Beggar's Bush*, Act II. Sc. 3.

266. l. 17. Continue from *The Examiner* as follows: 'The new musical farce, *My Spouse and I*, continues to be acted with deserved applause. It is by much the best thing brought out this season. It has a great deal of all that is necessary to a good farce, point, character, humour, and incident. It was admirably supported. Harley played a lively character of the bustling Fawcett-cast very happily. He may now stick very comfortably in the skirts of public favour, if he does not chuse to fling himself out of them. The only faults of this piece are, that it is too long in the second act, and that Miss Kelly continues somewhat too long in breeches, for the purposes of decorum. Mr. Barnard, as a country lad, played very well, and was deservedly encored in a song, "But not for me the merry bells."'
  Smiles and Tears. By Mrs. Charles Kemble (Maria Theresa De Camp, 1774–1838), produced December 12, 1815.

268. *Deaf and Dumb.* Thomas Holcroft's version (1801) of Bouilly's *Abbé de l'Épée*. For Hazlitt's high opinion of it see the *Life of Holcroft*, vol. III. pp. 235–36.

[1] Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, II. 17–18.

NOTES

PAGE

268. *Father and Daughter.* Mrs. Opie's (1769–1853) first publication (1801).
  l. 29. In *The Examiner* Hazlitt adds: 'Mr. Liston spoke an indifferent epilogue inimitably well.'
  '*A custom more honoured,*' *etc.* *Hamlet*, I. 4. 16.
269. '*These odds more even.*' Cf. *Measure for Measure*, III. I. 41.
  '*A good hater.*' See vol. IV. note to p. 104.
  '*He is the fitter for heaven.*' *George Barnwell*, Act III. Sc. 3.
  '*Could he lay,*' *etc.* *Ibid.*, Act IV. Sc. I.
270. *The Busy Body.* Mrs. Centlivre's comedy (1709).
  '*His voice,*' *etc.* *As You Like It*, II. 7. 165.
271. *Barnes.* 'Mrs. Barnes from Exeter.' December 29, 1815.
  '*The divine Desdemona.*' *Othello*, II. I. 73.
  '*That flows on,*' *etc.* *Ibid.*, III. 3. 456.
  Zanga or Bajazet. In Young's *The Revenge* and Rowe's *Tamerlane* respectively.
272. '*Then, oh, farewell!*' For this and the other *Othello* quotations cf. *ante*, p. 189.
  It has been considered, etc. Hazlitt had used the greater part of this paragraph for 'On Actors and Acting' in *The Round Table.* See vol. IV. pp. 156–57, and notes.
273. '*Two at a time,*' *etc.* *The Beggar's Opera*, Act III. Sc. 4.
  Edwin. John Edwin, the elder (1749–1790), one of the great comedians of his day. Hazlitt does not mean that he saw him; he makes it clear in a passage in the *Conversations of Northcote* that he did not. Also his reference to Edwin (*ante*, p. 230, and in *The Round Table*) as being 'in the full vigour of his reputation,' with King, Parsons, Dodd, and Quick, when he first knew the London stage, must be a mistake. Possibly he confused him with John Edwin the younger (1768–1805). See *post*, note to p. 373.
274. '*His fortune swells him,*' *etc.* *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, Act V. Sc. I.
  '*Come hither, Marall,*' *etc.* *Ibid.*, Act II. Sc. I.
  '*I'm feeble,*' *etc.* *Ibid.*
  A Midsummer Night's Dream. As altered by F. Reynolds, and produced January 17, 1816.
  We hope we have not been, etc. The reference is to the concluding paragraph of Hazlitt's 'Theatrical Examiner' of November 26, 1815, for which see *The Round Table*, vol. IV. p. 64.
275. '*Injurious Hermia,*' *etc.* *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. 2. 195 *et seq.*
277. '*Is he not moved,*' *etc.* *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, Act IV. Sc. I, from memory.
  '*Lord, a Right Honourable Lord.*' *Ibid.*, Act II. Sc. I, and Act III. Sc. 2.
  '*Do themselves homage.*' *Othello*, I. I. 54.
  '*It came twanging off.*' *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, Act III. Sc. 2.
278. *Love for Love.* January 23, 1816.
  Parsons. William Parsons (1736–1795). Foresight was one of his best parts.
  '*School's up,*' *etc.* An interpolation apparently.
279. '*A great sea-porpoise.*' 'You great sea-calf,' Miss Prue says to him (Act III. Sc. 7).
  '*And pray sister,*' *etc.* Act II. Sc. 9.
  The Anglade Family. *Accusation, or The Family of D'Anglade*, adapted from the French by J. H. Payne, and produced February 1, 1816.
280. *The Maid and the Magpye.* Cf. *ante*, p. 244.
  Note. Lavalette, after the second Bourbon restoration in 1815, was, along with Ney, condemned to death, but escaped by changing clothes with his wife.
281. *The same drama.* The Covent Garden version (February 1) was by James Kenney.

PAGE

281. *Mathews.* Charles Mathews (1776–1835), the elder, best remembered for his entertainments called 'At Homes,' which he began in 1808.

Charles Kemble. Charles Kemble (1775–1854), the younger brother of Mrs. Siddons and John Philip Kemble, first appeared in London in 1794, and retired in 1840.

Measure for Measure. Covent Garden, February 8, 1816.

282. '*If I do lose thee,' etc.* *Measure for Measure*, III. 1. 7 *et seq.*

283. '*To lie in cold obstruction,' etc.* *Ibid.*, III. 1. 119–32.

'*Careless,' etc.* *Ibid.*, IV. 2. 150–52.

'*He has been drinking hard,' etc.* *Ibid.*, IV. 3. 46–47.

'*A dish of some three-pence.*' *Ibid.*, II. 1. 95.

We do not understand. Hazlitt had reproduced the substance of this paragraph in the *Characters of Shakespear's Plays* (vol. IV. pp. 346-47 and notes).

Society for the Suppression of Vice. See vol. IV. p. 60, and note.

284. '*The enemies of the human race.*' Hazlitt is fond of quoting (or adapting) this English newspaper description of Napoleon.

'*Oh fie, fie.*' *Measure for Measure*, III. 1. 148.

Vetus. See *Political Essays.*

Sir Joshua Reynolds concluded his last lecture. The Fifteenth Discourse.

285. l. 35. In *The Examiner* the article concludes: '*Rosina* has been acted at this theatre to introduce the two Miss Halfords in the characters of *Rosina* and *Phœbe*. They have both of them succeeded, and equally well. If they are not a pair of Sirens, they are very pretty singers. Miss E. Halford is the tallest, and Miss S. Halford the fattest of the two.'

286. '*The mob are so pleased,' etc.* *The Recruiting Officer*, Act I. Sc. I.

'*Oh, the wonderful works of Nature.*' *Ibid.*, Act II. Sc. 3.

'*Well, Tummy.*' *Ibid.*

The Recruiting Officer. Hazlitt reproduces this paragraph, with his customary verbal changes, in the *English Comic Writers* (vol. VI. p. 89). Cf. also his preface to this play written for Oxberry's *New English Drama.*

287. l. 6. In *The Examiner* the article concludes as follows: 'The new farce of *What Next?* is very broad, very improbable, but if better managed, might have been made very laughable. The plot turns entirely on the disguise assumed by a nephew to personate his uncle, which leads to several ridiculous surprises and blunders, and the carrying on and the disentangling of the plot is effected with much more violence than art. It was once or twice in danger, but it hurried on so rapidly from absurdity to absurdity, that it at last distanced the critics. Even as a farce, it is too crude and coarse ever to become a very great favourite.' By T. Dibdin, produced at Drury Lane, Feb. 29.

287. *The Fair Penitent.* By Nicholas Rowe (1674–1718), produced in 1703. On the present occasion Charles Kemble played Lothario.

'*A Muse of fire,' etc.* *Henry V.*, Prologue I. 2.

'*An awkward imitator of Shakespear.*' *Tom Jones*, Book IX. chap. I.

288. '*Which to be hated,' etc.* Pope's *Essay on Man*, II. 218.

'*It was the day,' etc.* *The Fair Penitent*, Act III. Sc. I.

289. *The Duke of Milan.* Published in 1623.

'*Which felt a stain,' etc.* Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (ed. Payne, p. 89).

290. '*Proud to die,' etc.* *The Duke of Milan*, Act V. Sc. 2.

'*Some widow's curse,' etc.* See *ante*, note to p. 274.

'*By orphans' tears.*' See *ante*, note to p. 277.

291. l. 5. Add from *The Examiner:* 'Mr. Bartley spoke a new prologue on the occasion, which was well received.'

NOTES

PAGE

291. *Miss O'Neill's Lady Teazle.* In *The Examiner* this article opens with the following paragraph:

'Miss O'Neill (we beg pardon of the Board of Green Cloth, and are almost afraid that this style of theatrical criticism may not be quite consistent with the principles of subordination and the scale of respectability about to be established in Europe; for we read in the *Examiner* of last week the following paragraph: "At Berlin, orders have been given by the police to leave out the titles of Mr., Mrs., and Miss, prefixed to the names of public actors. The females are to take the name of *frou.* Accordingly we see the part of Desdemona, in Shakespeare's tragedy of *Othello,* is given out to be played by *frou* (woman) Schrok." This is as it should be, and legitimate. But to proceed till further orders in the usual style).'

Miss Farren. Elizabeth Farren (1759–1829), who first played in London in 1777, in 1797 married the 12th Earl of Derby. Her last appearance was in the character of Lady Teazle (April 8, 1797). Hazlitt writes of her in *Notes of a Journey:* 'The last English actress who shone in genteel comedy was Miss Farren, and she was just leaving the stage when I first became acquainted with it.'

292. *Mrs. Egerton.* Sarah Egerton (1782–1847) first appeared in London in 1811, and retired in 1835.

The late Mr. Cooke. Cooke was frequently too intoxicated to appear on the stage.

293. *Actors are accused, etc.* Hazlitt, it will be noted, wrote this passage (to the top of the next page) in defence of Kean, and incorporated it in his *Round Table* paper, 'On Actors and Acting.' See vol. IV. pp. 158–59, and notes thereto.

294. *On very good authority.* That is, Kean's own, presumably. See *ante,* note to p. 177.

'Deep than loud.' Cf. 'Curses, not loud, but deep.' *Macbeth,* v. 3. 27.

295. *The following account.* That is, his own, already reprinted, *ante,* pp. 179–80.

296. *'I would not have parted with it,' etc.* *The Merchant of Venice,* III. 1. 130.

297. *'Exhaling to the sky.'* Cf. 'No natural exhalation in the sky.' *King John,* III. 4. 153.

Madame Mainville Fodor. Josephine Fodor-Mainvielle (b. 1793). This was her first, or one of her first appearances in London. She retired from the stage in 1833.

'Has her exits,' etc. *As You Like It,* II. 7. 141.

298. *'Till the moon,' etc.* *Paradise Lost,* IV. 607 *et seq.*

'Hope told a flattering tale.' An anonymous song set to music by Paisiello.

Mons. Drouet. Louis François Philippe Drouet (1792–1873).

l. 29. *The Examiner* continues: '*Drury Lane.*—A young lady has appeared at this theatre in the character of *Cecilia* in the *Chapter of Accidents:* but from the insipidity of the character in which she chose to appear, we know no more of her powers of acting than before we saw her. Both her face and voice are pleasing.' The lady was Miss Murray. Sophia Lee's comedy *The Chapter of Accidents* was produced in 1780.

Mr. Cobham. Thomas Cobham (1786–1842).

'Made of penetrable stuff.' *Hamlet,* III. 4. 36.

299. *'Unhousell'd,' etc.* *Ibid.,* I. 5. 77–79.

Sir Pertinax MacSycophant. In Macklin's *The Man of the World* (1781). Bibby appeared on April 16, 1816.

Egerton. Daniel Egerton (1772–1835). Of the Covent Garden Company. He married Sarah Fisher, for whom see *ante,* p. 292.

300. *Miss Grimani.* Miss Grimani from Bath played Juliet, April 23, 1816.

PAGE

300. *Learned to speak of* ——. In *The Examiner:* 'Mrs. Bartley,' for whom see *ante*, note to p. 180.

'*How silver sweet*,' *etc.* *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2. 166.

'*The midnight bell*,' *etc.* *King John*, III. 3. 37–39.

'*Gentle tassel*.' 'To lure this tassel-gentle back again.' *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2. 159.

301. *Garrick's Ode on Shakespear.* Written for the Shakespeare Jubilee at Stratford in 1769.

'*Vesuvius in an eruption*,' *etc.* Gray, Letter to Warton, August 8, 1749. See *Letters* (ed. Tovey), I. 201.

'*I was ready to sink for him*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*

'*Was sung, but broke off in the middle*.' Unidentified.

302. *Mr. Stothard's late picture.* Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1813.

l. 20. Continue from *The Examiner:*

'But any one who chuses may see the celebration of the centenary of Shakspeare's death to-day, (which is Thursday) on Saturday or on Tuesday next, at Covent-Garden Theatre. They kill him there as often as the town pleases.——We cannot speak favourably of either of the new after-pieces, *Who wants a Wife?* and *Pitcairn's Island*. The one is contrived for Mr. Liston to make foolish love in; and the other for Mr. Smith to play that land-monster, a singing, swaggering, good-natured, honest, blackguard English Jack Tar, a sort of animal that ought never to come ashore, or as soon as it does, ought to go to sea again.'

'*Doubtless the pleasure*,' *etc.* *Hudibras*, Part II., Canto III., 1–2.

We promised last week. 'Mr. Kemble's Sir Giles Overreach, next week.' 'Theatrical Examiner,' April 28.

'*Full volly home*.' 'Full vollys' is Pope's (*Essay on Criticism*, 628); 'full circle home' is used elsewhere by Hazlitt, presumably after *King Lear*, v. 3. 176.

303. *Madame Sacchi.* Madame Sacchi's 'astonishing performances' on the tight-rope were included in the evening's entertainment.

'*So fails*,' *etc.* Cf. *The Excursion*, VII. 975–82. From memory, of course.

'*Affecting a virtue*.' 'Assume a virtue, if you have it not.' *Hamlet*, III. 4. 160.

l. 25. 'Out of himself into the part' in *The Examiner.*

'*They two can be made one flesh*.' Cf. *Genesis* ii. 24.

Dame Hellenore. *The Faerie Queene*, Book III. Canto x.

'*Aggravated*,' *etc.* *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I. 2. 85.

304. '*There is some fury*,' *etc.* *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, Act IV. Sc. I.

'*A word of naught*.' 'A thing of naught.' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, IV. 2. 15.

Hath a devil. *St. Luke* vii. 33. Hazlitt is fond of the phrase, and elsewhere applies it to Byron and to Beckford.

'*So stands the statue*,' *etc.* Thomson, *The Seasons*, Summer, 1347.

l. 24. Conclude from *The Examiner:* 'He must be sent to Coventry—or St. Helena!'

305. *Bertram.* By the Rev. Charles Robert Maturin (1782–1824), author of *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). *Bertram* had previously been recommended by Scott to Kemble who declined it.

Aristotle, etc. Part of the famous definition of tragedy in the *Poetics.*

'*Yes, the limner's art*,' *etc.* *Bertram*, Act I. Sc. 5.

306. '*And yet some sorcery*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*

307. '*Yea, thus they live*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*, Act III. Sc. 2.

'*By heaven*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*, Act IV. Sc. 2.

PAGE

307\. *The speech of Bertram. Ibid.*, Act v. Sc. 2.

'The wretched have no country.' Ibid., Act II. Sc. 3.

Miss Somerville. Margaret Agnes Somerville (1799–1883), whose first appearance Hazlitt notices here. In 1819 she married Alfred Bunn, the theatrical manager. Her subsequent appearances were fitful, and she retired at an early age.

308\. *'Decked in purple,' etc. Ibid.*, Act I. Sc. 5.

'Beholds that lady,' etc. Ibid.

l. 13. Add from *The Examiner:* 'Covent-Garden. We have seen Miss O'Neill's *Mrs. Oakley*. It is much better than her *Lady Teazle*, and yet it is not good. Her comedy is only tragedy *diluted*. It wants the true spirit.'

Adelaide, or the Emigrants. The first play of Richard Lalor Sheil (1791–1851). It had been brought out at Dublin in 1814.

309\. *'Throw it to the dogs,' etc. Macbeth*, v. 3. 47.

Mr. Murray. Charles Murray (1754–1821), after acquiring considerable reputation in the provinces, appeared at Covent Garden in 1796.

'As good as a prologue.' Unidentified.

310\. *'Where did you rest last night.'* See *ante*, note to p. 263.

It has been observed of Ben Jonson, etc. Hazlitt probably refers to Schlegel. See *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (ed. 1900, p. 464).

311\. *The scene in which Brainworm, etc.* Act I. Sc. 2.

'As dry,' etc. As You Like It, II. 7. 39.

The scene where he is about confide. Act III. Sc. 2.

'Like a man,' etc. 2 *Henry IV.*, III. 2. 332.

312\. *'The baby of a girl.' Macbeth*, III. 4. 106.

'Rather than so,' etc. Ibid., III. 1. 71–72.

313\. *Gil Blas.* Book VII., Chap. 4.

The princess Charlotte. Only daughter of the Prince Regent, and a great favourite of the nation's. She married (May 2, 1816) Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, and died November 5, 1817.

'Leave me to my repose.' 'Leave me, leave me to repose.' Gray. *Descent of Odin.*

'The line too labours,' etc. Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 371.

'I tell you,' etc. Cf. *Macbeth*, v. 1. 69.

314\. *'Go, go.'* In the banquet scene presumably, III. 4. 118-19.

Mr. Horace Twiss. Horace Twiss (1787–1849), the biographer of Lord Eldon, was a nephew of Mrs. Siddons and wrote for her an address which she delivered on taking her farewell of the stage, June 29, 1812.

'Himself again.' Richard III. (Cibber's version).

'Tomorrow and tomorrow.' Macbeth, v. 5. 19.

Printed by a steam-engine. The steam printing-press was adopted by *The Times* in November, 1814. There is humour in the thought that Hazlitt had recently concluded eight months on the staff of 'that prodigious prosing paper' when he reprinted this passage.

315\. *Up all Night, or the Smuggler's Cave.* By Matthew Peter King (1773–1823) first produced in 1809 (words by S. J. Arnold).

Our old friend Jerry Sneak. Samuel Thomas Russell (1769?–1845), great as Jerry Sneak in Foote's *Mayor of Garratt.*

The Beehive. A musical farce by John Gideon Millingen (1782–1862), produced in 1811.

Wrench. Benjamin Wrench (1778–1843), after playing at Bath and York, appeared in London in 1809 and became a well-known comedian at Drury Lane, The Lyceum and Covent Garden.

PAGE

315. *The School of Reform.* By Thomas Morton, produced in 1805.
316. *The Irish Widow.* By Garrick, produced in 1772.
 l. 10. Continue from *The Examiner :*
 'We believe there is not the smallest foundation besides for the scandals with which the Town have been lately amusing themselves to show their good-nature, and in which they would gladly persist to show their love of justice. To show ours, we shall insert the following letter, every word of which we shall believe to be true, till we have some reason for believing it to be otherwise; and we would advise every one, who is in our situation, to follow our example.' Mrs. Mardyn's letter to *The Morning Chronicle* follows.
 The Jealous Wife. By George Colman the elder, produced in 1761.
 Sylvester Daggerwood. By George Colman the younger, first acted in 1795 as 'New Hay at the Old Market.'
 '*Like angels' visits,*' *etc.* Blair, *The Grave.*
 Wild Oats. O'Keeffe's comedy, produced in 1794.
317. *The acting of Dowton and Russell.* Hazlitt incorporates this passage entire in *Lectures on the English Comic Writers*, vol. VI. pp. 167–68.
319. *The Poor Gentleman.* By George Colman the younger, produced in 1802.
 '*Do you read or sing?*' *etc.* Unidentified.
 The Agreeable Surprise. See Hazlitt's account of this farce in *The English Comic Writers*, vol. VI. pp. 166–67.
320. l. 4. Continue from *The Examiner :*
 'We saw Miss Matthews's name in the bills, but as it was her benefit night at Covent-Garden, her entrance in the afterpiece was an agreeable surprise to us.—*English Opera.* A gentleman of the name of Horn has re-appeared with much and deserved applause at this Theatre, in the part of the *Seraskier.* His voice and style of singing are good, and his action spirited and superior to that of singers in general. We hope soon to say more of him.' Charles Edward Horn (1786–1849), the composer of 'Cherry Ripe,' 'I know a bank,' etc.
 As we have heard them sung. Cf. *ante*, pp. 192–93.
321. *Exit by Mistake.* A comedy by Jameson.
322. *John Dennis.* Hazlitt probably refers to John Dennis's 'Remarks upon Cato,' 1713.
 The editor of a modern journal. Hazlitt's brother-in-law, no doubt, Dr. Stoddart. See *ante*, note to p. 174.
323. *The Beggar's Opera.* Cf. *ante*, pp. 193–95. Polly's famous song, 'Oh, ponder well! be not severe,' etc. (Act I.), is said to have turned the tide in favour of the opera at its first representation, January 29, 1728.
 One of God Almighty's gentlemen. Unacknowledged from Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, I. 645.
324. *Schlegel's work on the Drama.* See Lecture IV. *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (trans. John Black, ed. 1900), p. 64.
325. *Make the worse appear the better reason.* Unacknowledged from *Paradise Lost*, II. 113–14.
 Selon la coutume de notre pays. See vol. IV. note to p. 100.
 Cosi fan Tutti. Mozart's Opera, 1788.
 Dansomanie. By Étienne Nicolas Méhul (1763–1817), produced in Paris, 1800.
326. '*To draw three souls,*' *etc.* *Twelfth Night*, II. 3. 65.
 His country and all other things. 'His country and the Bourbons' in *The Examiner.*
 Mr. Naldi. Giuseppe Naldi (1770–1820), who first appeared in London in 1806.
 Pandarus. In *Troilus and Cressida.*

NOTES

PAGE

326. *Signor Begri.* Presumably Pierre Ignace Begrey (1783–1863), who appeared in London, 1815–22.

'Floats upon the air,' etc. Loosely quoted from *Comus*, 249–51.

'And silence,' etc. Ibid., 557–60.

327. *Madame Vestris.* Lucia Elizabeth Bartolozzi (1797–1856), granddaughter of the engraver, and the wife, first (1813) of Armand Vestris, a dancer at the King's Theatre, and second (1838), of Charles James Mathews. She first appeared in London in 1815, and retired in 1854.

Miss L. Kelly. The younger sister of Frances Maria Kelly, born 1795.

328. l. 13. In *The Examiner* the article concludes as follows: '*Love in a Village* is put off till Thursday next, and Mr. Incledon is to perform in *Artaxerxes* on Tuesday. Mr. Horn played the *Seraskier* in the *Siege of Belgrade* on Friday, and sung the songs, particularly 'My heart with love is beating' with great truth and effect. Mr. Russell's *Leopold* was very lively. It is not necessary to say that Miss Kelly's *Lilla* was good, for all that she does is so.'

My Landlady's Night-Gown. My Landlady's Gown (August 10, 1816), by Walley Chamberlain Oulton (1770?–1820?).

'Its own place.' Paradise Lost, I. 254.

329. l. 4. Continue from *The Examiner:*

'A Miss Ives played a little plump chambermaid prettily enough. *The Jealous Wife* was acted at this Theatre on Monday. Mr. Meggett played *Mr. Oakley* but indifferently. He seemed to be at hawk and buzzard between insipid comedy and pompous tragedy. It was not the thing. Mr. Terry's *Major Oakley* we like very much. Mrs. Glover, who played *Mrs. Oakley*, is really too big for this little theatre. The stage cannot contain her, and her violent airs. Miss Taylor was *Miss Russet*, and looked like a very nice, runaway school-girl. Barnard played her lover, and got through the part very well.'

Rosetta. In Bickerstaffe's *Love in a Village.*

Mr. Chatterley. William Symonds Chatterley (1787–1822).

Castle of Andalusia. A comic opera by O'Keeffe, produced in 1782.

331. *'Gone like a crab,' etc. Hamlet*, II. 2. 209-10.

Mr. Terry last week, etc. At the Haymarket, on August 27, 1816.

The Surrender of Calais. By George Colman the younger (1791).

'The line too labours,' etc. Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, 371.

A learned critic. Schlegel, on Dryden. See *Lectures on Dramatic Literature* (trans. John Black, ed. 1900), p. 479.

332. *'Not to be hated.'* Cf. Pope, *Essay on Man*, II. 218.

The Wonder. Mrs. Centlivre's (1714), Covent Garden, Sep. 13, 1816.

The Busy Body. 1709.

333. *'Trippingly from* [on] *the tongue.' Hamlet*, III. 2. 2.

'A Scotsman is not ashamed,' etc. The Wonder, Act v. Sc. 1.

334. *A Mr. Macready.* Hazlitt here notices the first appearance in London of William Charles Macready (1793–1873), Covent Garden, Sep. 16, 1816. Macready refers to Hazlitt in connection with this and the following notices as 'at that time an authority almost supreme on subjects of theatrical taste' (*Reminiscences*, 1875, I. 128).

335. *The epithet in Homer.* κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοί.

Lover's Vows. See *ante*, p. 249.

Writer in the Courier. Coleridge, who belaboured *Bertram* in the *Biographia Literaria* also.

336. *'Pointing to* [at] *the skies.'* Pope, *Moral Essays*, III. 339.

'A vaporous drop profound.' Macbeth, III. 5. 24.

PAGE

336. *Miss Boyle's Rosalind.* October 2, 1816.
 'How silver sweet,' etc. *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 2. 166.
 Lady Townley. In Vanbrugh and Cibber's *The Provoked Husband.*

337. *'Our poesy,' etc.* *Timon of Athens*, I. I. 21-25.
 The Italian Lover. Robert Jephson's (1736-1803) *Julia, or the Italian Lover* (1787), revived at Covent Garden, Sep. 30, 1816.

338. l. 10. Conclude from *The Examiner :*
 '*Drury Lane.*—O'Keeffe's farce of the *Blacksmith of Antwerp* was brought out here on Thursday [Oct. 3, 1816], Mr. Munden being sufficiently recovered from his indisposition. It is founded on the old story of *Quintin Matsys* and the Citizen of Antwerp, who would marry his daughter to no one but a painter. It is full of pleasant incidents and situations, which succeed one another with careless rapidity, without fatiguing the attention or exciting much interest. It is one of the least striking of O'Keeffe's productions. It however went off very well, and we dare say will have a run. The music is pleasing enough.'
 Mr. Macready's Othello. October 10, 1816.
 'Let Afric,' etc. Young, *The Revenge*, Act v. Sc. 2.

339. *'I do agnise,' etc.* *Othello*, I. 3. 232-34.
 'No, not much moved.' *Ibid.*, III. 3. 224.
 'Othello's occupation 's gone.' *Ibid.*, III. 3. 357.
 'Yet, oh the pity of it,' etc. *Ibid.*, IV. I. 206-7.
 'Swell, bosom,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 3. 449-50.
 'Like to the Pontic sea,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 3. 453-55.
 'Horror on horror's head,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 3. 370.
 'Pride, pomp,' etc. *Ibid.*, III. 3. 354.

340. *'We never saw a gentleman,' etc.* Unidentified.
 Mr. Stephen Kemble. Stephen Kemble (1758-1822), another brother of Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble.
 Sir John Falstaff. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was played at Drury Lane, October 10, 1816.
 Mr. Lambert. Daniel Lambert (1770-1809), celebrated for his proportions.
 'Had guts in his brains.' Cf. 'Who wears his wit in his belly and his guts in his head.' *Troilus and Cressida*, II. I. 79.
 'How he cuts up,' etc. Burke, *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (*Works*, Bohn, v. 145).
 'The gods have not made,' etc. Cf. *As You Like It*, III. 3. 16.
 The writer in the Courier. Coleridge again.
 Sir Richard Steele tells us, etc. See a paper 'On the Death of Peer, the Property Man,' in *The Guardian* (No. 82), June 15, 1713.

342. *Mr. Kemble's Cato.* October 25, 1816.
 l. 5. Continue from *The Examiner :*
 'Owing to the early filling of the house, we were prevented from seeing *Othello* on Tuesday; but we understand that Mr. Young played Othello like a great humming-top, "full of sound, but signifying nothing," [1] and that Mr. Macready in Iago was like a mischievous boy whipping him; and that Miss Boyle did not play Desdemona as unaffectedly as she ought. But we hope we have been misinformed: and shall be glad to say so, if possible, in our next.'
 'Being mortal.' *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II. I. 135.
 The Iron Chest. By George Colman the younger (1796), revived at Drury Lane, November 23, 1816.

343. *Adam Winterton.* A character in *The Iron Chest.*

[1] Cf. *Macbeth*, v. 5. 28.

PAGE

343. *Mr. Colman was enraged, etc.* He wrote an angry preface which was suppressed after the first edition.

344. '*Wears his heart,*' *etc.* *Othello*, I. 1. 62–63.

'*Truly he hath a devil.*' See note, *ante*, p. 304.

'*The fiery soul,*' *etc.* Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, Part I., 156–58.

345. l. 5. Conclude from *The Examiner :*

'The new farce, *Laugh to Day and Cry Tomorrow* [by E. P. Knight], met as it deserved a very indifferent reception. It was a series of awkward clap-traps about the glory of Old England, and the good-nature of English audiences. Munden was the only thing in it not *damnable.*'

Mr. Kemble's King John. December 3, 1816.

'*When we waked,*' *etc.* *The Tempest*, III. 2. 151–52.

346. '*Man delight,*' *etc.* *Hamlet*, II. 2. 321–22.

347. '*Bulk, the thews,*' *etc.* 2 *Henry IV.*, III. 2. 276–77.

'*Could Sir Robert,*' *etc.* *King John*, I. 1. 240.

Coriolanus. November 28 and 30, 1816. This article, except the last paragraph, Hazlitt had already reproduced in the *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, see vol. IV. pp. 214–6 and notes thereon.

349 l. 17. Add from *The Examiner :*

'Mrs. Hunt, we dare say, was of the same opinion the other day when she read the account of the Spa-fields meeting.' At which her husband, Henry ('Orator') Hunt (1773–1835), took the principal part.

The Man of the World. Revived December 27, 1816.

Mr. Henry Johnston. Henry Erskine Johnston (1777–1830?), the 'Scottish Roscius.'

Sir Archy Mac Sarcasm. In Macklin's *Love à-la-Mode* (1793) revived at Covent Garden, with Johnston as Sir Archy, on December 10, 1816.

351. '*Die and leave,*' *etc.* *Twelfth Night*, I. 5. 262–63.

352. '*Ever charming, ever new,*' Dyer, *Grongar Hill*, l. 103.

Jane Shore. January 2, 1817. Rowe's tragedy was first produced in 1713.

353. *The Humorous Lieutenant.* 'The bad alteration' was by Frederic Reynolds. Celia was played by 'a Young Lady, 1st appearance on any stage.'

'*Whose utmost skirts,*' *etc.* *Paradise Lost*, XI. 332–33.

Like Virgil's wood. *Æneid*, III. 37–40.

'*Whom lovely Venus,*' *etc.* *L'Allegro*, 14 *et seq.*

354. '*When you do dance,*' *etc.* *The Winter's Tale*, IV. 3. 140-42.

Booth. Junius Brutus Booth (1796–1852), whose first important appearances in London are noticed in this and the two following articles. The last years of his life were spent in America.

'*What does he* [do they] *in the north.*' *Richard III.*, IV. 4. 485.

355. '*A weak invention,*' *etc.* Cf. 'A thing devised by the enemy.' *Richard III.*, V. 3. 307.

Figaro. Holcroft's *The Follies of a Day ; or, the Marriage of Figaro* (1784).

356. '*The fell opposite.*' Cf. 'Fatal opposite,' *Twelfth Night*, III. 4. 296, and 'Fell-incensed points of mighty opposites,' *Hamlet*, V. 2. 61–62.

'*I know my price no less.*' *Othello*, I. 1. 11.

'*Give the world,*' *etc.* *Hamlet*, III. 4. 62.

'*My wit comes,*' *etc.* Cf. *Othello*, II. 1. 126–27.

357. '*Bony prizer.*' *As You Like It*, II. 3. 8.

The O. P. rows. The old price riots at the new Covent Garden Theatre in 1809.

358. *Frightened to Death.* A musical farce by W. C. Oulton.

359. '*From which no traveller returns.*' *Hamlet*, III. 1. 80.

360. '*In hidden mazes,*' *etc.* Cf. *L'Allegro*, 141–42.

PAGE
361. '*Frontlet.*' *King Lear*, I. 4. 210.
362. *The Inn-Keeper's Daughter.* By George Soane (1790–1860).
363. *As Gerat, the singer, did.* Pierre Jean Gerat (1764–1823).
'*Airs from heaven*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, I. 4. 41.
364. '*And when she spake*,' *etc.* *The Faerie Queene*, II. iii. 24.
365. *Signor Ambrogetti.* Giuseppe Ambrogetti was in London 1817-21.
'*Sense of amorous delight.*' 'The spirit of love and amorous delight.' *Paradise Lost*, VIII. 477.
Signor Crivelli, etc. Gaetano Crivelli (1774–1836), a tenor; Violante Camporese (b. 1785), a soprano; Carlo Angrisani (b. *circa* 1760), a bass.
Ex uno omnes. 'Ab uno disce omnes.' *Æneid*, II. 65–66.
367. '*With all appliances*,' *etc.* 2 *Henry IV.*, III. I. 29.
'*The golden cadences*,' *etc.* 'Golden cadence of poesy.' *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. 2.
369. *Paysanne Parvenue. Le Paysan Parvenu* (1735).
370. l. 14. Conclude from *The Examiner :*
'We have not room to say much of the new tragedy of *The Apostate*, for which we are not sorry, as we should have little good to say of it. The poetry does not rise to the merit of commonplace, and the tragic situations are too violent, frequent, and improbable. It is full of a succession of self-inflicted horrors. Miss O'Neill played the heroine of the piece, whose affectation and meddling imbecility occasion all the mischief, and played it shockingly well. Mr. Young's *Malec* was in his best and most imposing manner. The best things in *The Apostate* were the palpable hits at the Inquisition and Ferdinand the Beloved, which were taken loudly and tumultuously by the house, a circumstance which occasioned more horror in that wretched infatuated devoted tool of despotism, the Editor of *The New Times*, than all the other horrors of the piece. The Dungeons of the Holy Inquisition, whips, racks, and slow fires, kindled by legitimate hands, excite no horror in his breast; but that a British public still revolt at these things, that that fine word Legitimacy has not polluted their souls and poisoned their very senses with the slime and filth of slavery and superstition, this writhes his brain and plants scorpions in his mind, and makes his flesh crawl and shrink in agony from the last expression of manhood and humanity in an English audience, as if a serpent had wound round his heart!'
The Apostate, by Richard Lalor Sheil (1791–1851).
'*Ignorant impatience.*' Unidentified.
'*Something rotten*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, I. 4. 90.
Mr. Sinclair. John Sinclair (1791–1857), tenor singer.
'*To split the ears*,' *etc.* *Hamlet*, III. 2. 12.
371. '*A singing face.*' W. B. Rhodes's (1772–1826) burlesque, *Bombastes Furioso*, Sc. I:

'Fusbos, give place,
You know you haven't got a singing face.'

The line was spoken by Liston.
Neither to sing nor say. Cf. Burke on the monks: 'They are as usefully employed as those who neither sing nor say' (*Reflections on the French Revolution*, ed. Payne, p. 189).
'*And of his port*,' *etc.* *The Canterbury Tales*, Prologue, 69.
372. '*None but himself*,' *etc.* Lewis Theobald, *The Double Falsehood*, Act III. Sc. I.
l. 9. Conclude from *The Examiner :*
'Drury Lane. The farce of *The Romp* was revived here, and we hope will be continued, for we like to laugh when we can. Mrs. Alsop does the part of *Priscilla Tomboy*, and is all but her mother in it. Knight is clever enough as

PAGE

Watty Cockney; and the piece, upon the whole, went off with great *éclat*, allowing for the badness of the times, for our want of genius for comedy, and of taste for farce.'

The Romp, founded on Bickerstaffe's *Love in a City*, and first produced 1781.

Barbarossa. By John Brown (1715–1766), author of *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (1757). *Barbarossa* was produced in 1754, *Athelstane*, the author's other tragedy, in 1756.

Paul and Virginia. A musical drama by James Cobb (1756–1818), produced in 1800.

'*And when your song*,' *etc.* *The Tatler*, No. 163 (by Addison).

373. *Mrs. Siddons's Lady Macbeth.* Mrs. Siddons played Lady Macbeth on June 5, 1817, with J. P. Kemble as Macbeth and Charles Kemble as Macduff.

It is nearly twenty years since we first saw her. Cf. the *Plain Speaker* essay, 'On Antiquity': 'I can never forget the first time of my seeing Mrs. Siddons act.' We do not know whether the two occasions were the same, but possibly not, as he saw her also as Isabella in Garrick's play of the name, and as Mrs. Beverley in *The Stranger*, prior to the end of his student days in London (1796–1797). In conversation with Northcote he definitely dates his first theatrical memory (in London) as Bannister in *The Prize* (1793), the year of his arrival at college at the age of fifteen. Mrs. Siddons was playing continuously at Drury Lane during the three ensuing seasons. In 1797–1798 he was at home, at Wem, and consequently missed Mrs. Abington (whom, at the end of his life, he 'would give fifty pounds' to have seen), whose retirement after 1790 was broken by a full, and final, season of playing in that winter. For his devotion to Mrs. Siddons (in the intervals of his painting) after his return to town in 1799, see the essay, 'The Letter Bell.'

374. *Mr. Maywood.* Robert Campbell Maywood (1790–1856).

l. 8. After 'firm and well conceived' insert from *The Examiner*: 'The use which he makes of his hands (a part of the human body which players are more at a loss to know what to do with than any others) is too constant, and too uniformly the same.'

'*Thank God*,' *etc.* *The Merchant of Venice*, III. 1. 110.

Mr. Kemble's retirement. Covent Garden, June 23, 1817.

It is near twenty years ago. See note on Mrs. Siddons above.

375. '*Like an eagle*,' *etc.* *Coriolanus*, V. 6. 115–17.

'*My mother bows*,' *etc.* *Ibid.*, V. 3. 29–31.

376. '*Nothing extenuate*,' *etc.* *Othello*, V. 2. 342–43.

It has always appeared to us. From this point to near the bottom of p. 378 Hazlitt is drawing for his *Times* notice on an earlier *Champion* paper, 'Mr. Kemble's Penruddock' (November 20, 1814). See the volumes devoted to his journalism.

377. '*Is whispering*,' *etc.* *A Winter's Tale*, I. 2. 284–96.

'*Every* [each] *corporal agent.*' *Macbeth*, I. 7. 80.

'*There was neither variableness*,' *etc.* *St. James* i. 17.

'*The fire i' th' flint*,' *etc.* *Timon of Athens*, I. 1. 22–23.

'*The tug and war.*' Cf. 'Then was the tug of war.' Lee, *Alexander the Great*, Act IV. Sc. 2.

'*Fate and metaphysical aid.*' *Macbeth*, I. 5. 30.

378. '*My way of life*,' *etc.* *Macbeth*, V. 3. 2–3.

'*The fiery soul*,' *etc.* Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, I. 156–58.

'*You shall relish*,' *etc.* Cf. *Othello*, II. 1. 167.

379. *Invita Minerva.* Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 385.